

# Free France

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French Colonial

*Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité.*



## FRENCH COLONIAL POLICY IN AFRICA

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*M. René Plaven, Commissioner of Colonies*



*The late Félix Eboué, Governor-General of French Equatorial Africa*

*Félix Eboué, born December 26, 1884 at Cayenne, French Guiana; educated at Bordeaux, graduated from "L'Ecole Coloniale" in Paris; Colonial Administrator in Ubangi-Chari 1909; Secretary-General of Martinique 1931; Governor of French Sudan 1935; Governor of Guadeloupe 1937; Governor of Chad 1938; first French Colonial Governor to join Free French August 1940; Governor-General of French Equatorial Africa November 1940; member of the Empire Council and "Compagnon de l'Ordre de la Libération"; died May 17, 1944 at Cairo, Egypt.*



*"The chiefs must have the respect of those they govern;  
they must also have ours."  
(Félix Eboué)*

# Free France

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## FRENCH COLONIAL POLICY IN AFRICA

### FRANCE AND "BLACK" AFRICA

On May 17, 1944, Felix Eboué, Governor-General of French Equatorial Africa, died in Cairo. But, before his death, this "great African Frenchman," as General de Gaulle had called him, had had the time to formulate the general principles of the policy France intends to follow in guiding the development of the peoples of "Black" Africa in the future. France is responsible for these peoples, and desires to associate them more and more with its own progress and evolution.

M. Eboué served in office from 1912 until his death, first as a Colonial Administrator in Ubangi-Chari, then as Governor of Chad, and finally as Governor-General of French Equatorial Africa. He was ever untiring in his efforts to solve the problems arising from the presence of the French in Africa, ever showing profound understanding, great intelligence, knowledge, and kindness in his approach to these problems. The native tribes and their chiefs, as well as the Europeans, loved and respected him for the painstaking interest he unceasingly applied to African problems at every stage of his career.

M. Eboué spoke several African dialects. He led the movement that started cotton-growing in French Equatorial Africa; he had begun to lift the veil which clouds in mystery the so-called "Sociétés d'Initiés" of Central Africa, and the language of the tom-toms.

In 1939, M. Eboué was appointed Governor of Chad. He prepared the natives for war, and, when France signed an Armistice, they were the first to rally to General de Gaulle. When the latter appointed him Governor-General of the federation of colonies and territories known as French Equatorial Africa, this large part of France's African Empire, although cut off from

the home country, knew through his efforts a new life. M. Eboué, with patience and forethought, brought about a change in native policy, tending toward greater justice and more co-operation among the different parts of the territory.

As soon as he arrived in Brazzaville, he issued an administrative memorandum, in which he defined his attitude in regard to the various problems of the hour. Europeans and natives alike immediately recognized that their Governor was not only an experienced leader, but at the same time enterprising and cautious. The Governor of British Nigeria, Sir Bernard Bourdillon, had M. Eboué's memorandum translated and copies of it distributed throughout his colony. Passages from the memorandum comprise Appendix I of this publication.

With the support of General de Gaulle, of M. Plevin, Commissioner for Colonies, aided by all, and particularly by Governor Henri Laurentie (then Secretary-General of French Equatorial Africa), M. Eboué put the colony on a war-footing, after which he instituted several radical reforms. On November 8, 1942, he issued a second memorandum which marks a date in colonial history. Native Policy is a real contribution to the time-worn debate between those who stand for the complete assimilation of natives, and those who respect and believe in preserving their own culture. This memorandum constitutes Appendix II of this publication.

After the institution in French Equatorial Africa of the reforms outlined in this memorandum, which M. Eboué had recommended for other colonies as well, M. Plevin decided to call a conference of all governors of French African territories for the purpose of discussing colonial policy in "Black" Africa. Brazzaville, the principal city of French Equatorial Africa, where the

explorer Brazza negotiated with King Makoko in September, 1880, and where the Free French acquired in August, 1940 their first free French soil in Africa, was chosen as the place of meeting of the governors.

Part II of this publication includes the text of the recommendations approved during the Brazzaville Conference, together with a historical survey of France's place in "Black" Africa and the general policy which has been followed in these territories.

Extracts from an important speech by M. Pleven, Commissioner for Colonies, on the question of Colonial policy, delivered before the Provisional Consultative Assembly in Alger, are given in Appendix III.

## FRENCH POLICY IN CONTINENTAL AFRICA

In view of the great differences of origin and civilization which are characteristic of the territories composing France Overseas, it is impossible to adopt for their administration a uniform policy and uniform methods. The differences in family life and political and religious customs are far greater among the various French colonial populations than the corresponding differences in Metropolitan France. Moreover, the tempo of progress is not the same everywhere, and even within one territory it does not affect all social classes equally.

For these reasons, every generalization in matters of French colonial policy is liable to prove inaccurate and false, if it is made without taking into consideration the geographical factor. However, if all the local details involved were to be examined, a proper study and understanding of French overseas problems would still remain impossible. Therefore it appears indispensable to classify the territories into several groups. One of the least inaccurate of such classifications, which takes into account the main political as well as geographical considerations, is that which distributes the territories of France Overseas in four categories: "White" Africa, Old colonies or assimilated colonies, Indo-China and "Black" Africa.

"White" Africa whose southern frontier has often been defined as marked by the Tropic of Cancer, comprises the Departments of Algeria, and the Protectorates of Morocco and Tunisia which, with their population of 18 million Moslems and Europeans, are, so to speak, a continuation of Europe on the other side of the Mediterranean. The problems which France had to face in these African territories, were due to the fact that the Islamic religion of the Berbers, Arabs and Moors made it impossible for them to progress in the same conditions and at the same pace as the French people in France or the Jews of North Africa.

With a view to solving the numerous problems arising from the contacts between differing civilizations, France decided to commit herself to a bold line of policy: under the Ordinance of March 7, 1944, all

Algerian Moslems may be admitted without restriction into the French community as it is defined by French laws. This reform means a considerable extension of the idea of the Nation as conceived until now, but it does conform to the ideas which prevailed in the France of 1789. As regards the problems arising in the North-African Protectorates, their solution depends upon these protected states themselves no less than upon France.

The "Old" or assimilated colonies are, for the greater part, a remainder of the first colonial Empire established by the French Monarchy prior to the Revolution. Their assimilation is the conclusion of a long evolution shared together with the mother country; in the case of the most ancient among these colonies, it represents three centuries of common hardships, hopes, achievements. The French West Indies, Guiana, the Réunion Island, with an aggregate population of 800,000, are truly French Departments. All their inhabitants are French citizens, the administration is ensured by themselves through the medium of Communal and General Councils elected by universal suffrage as in France; the principle of "no taxation without representation" is strictly applied; no customs duties are levied without prior consent; in the French Parliament the representatives of these territories sit side by side with those of the other French Departments.

The rights enjoyed by New Caledonia, the French Pacific Possessions and Tahiti, even though less complete than those of the preceding group, are such as to classify them indubitably among the territories on their way to assimilation. Not all of their inhabitants are citizens, and the General Councils do not enjoy the full responsibility of the administration of public affairs, but the impulsion toward assimilation has been unmistakably given, and return to a previous phase would be inconceivable.

As regards Indo-China, it forms a world of its own, with an Asiatic population of 24 million; Cochin-China, the older French Dominion in Indo-China provides an example of gradual assimilation to French customs. At the same time, the resurrection of the Kmer culture exemplifies the respect felt by France for the native cultures of Asia. The policy of France remains what it always was: an effort to safeguard and perpetuate these cultures, introduce the country to modern civilization and reconcile the customs of the West with the native customs of Indo-China.

We have to consider now the fourth group of territories which form the so-called "Black" Africa, but for which we will rather use the name of "Continental" Africa. It comprises a block of 21 million inhabitants which includes Equatorial Africa, West Africa and the Cameroons, as well as an insular part which consists of Madagascar with the adjoining islands, with a population of some four million; French Somaliland on the Red Sea is economically related to this latter part, as well as the Réunion Island, geographically connected with Africa:

|                                             | <i>Inhabitants</i> | <i>Sq. Miles</i> |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Equatorial Africa .....                     | 3,423,000          | 961,200          |
| West Africa and Togoland<br>(mandate) ..... | 15,441,000         | 1,837,200        |
| Cameroons (mandate) .....                   | 2,341,000          | 162,900          |
| Madagascar and adjoining<br>islands .....   | 3,798,000          | 228,600          |
| Austral possessions:                        |                    |                  |
| Réunion Island .....                        | 209,000            | 1,000            |
| Somali Coast .....                          | 46,000             | 8,400            |

It was not until 1880-1885 that colonial expansion towards the Congo began to capture the attention of France; at that time a series of agreements were concluded with the native chiefs with a view to connecting the Upper Senegal with the Upper Niger. It is likewise in 1885 that a treaty of protection was signed with the Hova Government of Madagascar. Prior to these agreements, French interests in "Continental" Africa were represented only by the "Comptoirs du Sénégal" founded under the Ancien Régime prior to the Revolution; at first they were concentrated along the river, and were later formed into an organized territory. France also possessed a number of settlements along the shores of the Atlantic, such as Porto Novo, Kotonou in Guinea, and stations in the Gabon, such as Libreville.

In accordance with the *Senatus Consultes* promulgated in 1854 and 1866 under the Second Empire, the French colonies were classified in two categories: the West Indies and Réunion which continued their process of assimilation to Metropolitan France, were under the jurisdiction of Parliament; all other territories were administered by the executive power, pending special legislation. This legislation however was never enacted, either under the Empire or under the 3rd Republic. Consequently, the methods of administration of the colonial territories other than the assimilated colonies, constituted a compromise between the policy of complete assimilation inherited from the Monarchy and the Revolutionary Assemblies, and the respect for local cultures, that is to say, the necessity for taking into consideration the differences between French and native customs and ways of life.

In political matters, this duality and indecision were manifested by the steadily growing interest shown by the French Parliament in colonial matters, even those which under the provisions of the *Senatus Consultes*, were not subject to its authority. As a matter of fact, there was nothing to prevent the representatives of the nation from offering seats in the Parliament to Guiana, Cochinchina, Senegal, French India, nor from making Metropolitan laws applicable to certain colonies, whenever this became necessary in view of their needs and evolution. In such a manner, the French Parliament gradually became acquainted with the problems involved in the administration of the territories of "Continental" Africa.

In administrative matters, however, the executive power had full opportunity to organize the new territories of Equatorial and West Africa, as well as of Madagascar. The creation of a colonial ministry in 1891, as well as the formation of a specialized personnel, such as administrators, officers, doctors, etc., enabled the executive power to devote its attention to the details of local administration. On entering into closer contact with the native populations, it acquired the conviction that in order to ensure a harmonious evolution of all these races and tribes, so different from each other, it was necessary to adapt colonial policy to the forms and needs of their regional life, instead of imposing upon them a general policy of assimilation. The traditional official doctrine remained that of complete assimilation, and French citizenship was granted to those natives who requested it and who were worthy of it. But practically, and as a matter of course, the evolution of the natives consisted in a harmonization between Western and native customs, in which the latter became modernized without abandoning their originality.

In economic matters, it has become customary to quote, with regard to new and vast colonial territories, the somewhat too famous words of Jules Ferry from a speech made in 1885 in the Chamber of Deputies: "The European nations want colonies with a view to securing raw materials, trade markets and investment opportunities for their capital."<sup>1</sup> It is nevertheless apparent that in French Continental Africa the main effort has been concentrated upon the human factor which overshadowed the economic aspect.

In July, 1891 a project was introduced in the Senate providing for the installation in Continental Africa of powerful companies endowed with administrative authority. Even though the repeal of this bill by the Senate, backed by public opinion, did not constitute a formal definition of the colonial policy of France, it indicated clearly that the will of the nation was to prevent economic exploitation from becoming the driving impulse of French colonization. This trend may have slowed the material development of French West Africa, Equatorial Africa and of Madagascar, but it most certainly accelerated the moral evolution, that source and foundation of every durable progress.

It seems probable that if a revolt of the native elements had broken out in the difficult days experienced by France between 1914 and 1919, she would have been unable to maintain her positions overseas by force.

"We are in 1915," writes Governor General Olivier in his book: *Six Years of Social Policy in Madagascar*, "seized at the throat by a formidable aggressor. France has been forced to call to the rescue even the most remote of her sons. As in all our colonies, the tricolor waves in Madagascar over the 'maison de France'; but every native can see by himself that three-quarters of its

1. This was only one of the reasons behind Jules Ferry's colonial policy. It is not to be forgotten that he added immediately afterwards: "Our first duty is to fight against the Negro trade, this horrible traffic, and that infamy — slavery."



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*Modern means of communication are becoming increasingly common in deepest Africa.*

occupants are away, that the best have had to leave. A slight pressure on the door would be sufficient. . . . Well, it has not been exerted."

Quite to the contrary, from 1914 to 1918 more than 200,000 natives from Continental Africa alone (without taking into account the Cameroons, and Equatorial Africa) enlisted as volunteers.

If the bonds between the African populations and France had been essentially of economic nature, it is not likely that such loyalty and attachment would have been shown.

It seems equally certain that if the relations linking Metropolitan France to her African dominions had been dependent for their strength upon the material welfare of the native populations, the activity of commercial exchanges and more generally upon economic prosperity, rather than upon an attachment of a higher sort, the defeat of June, 1940 would have resulted in disaffection on the part of the native population who would have sought new bases of economic security.

As a matter of fact, the native populations of French Equatorial Africa and the Cameroons — the first territories to join Free France — were in full agreement with the whites in their desire to stay in the war and to bar access of their territories to the Italian and German Armistice Commissions. In many instances, native chiefs and officials spontaneously demanded that their country should remain in the war and reject the Armistice. In the Cameroons this idea was forcefully expressed, namely: "Do not deliver us to Hitler." These populations, young, vigorous, not afraid to fight, even against heavy odds, refused to admit as permanent the defeat of France, and gave a magnificent example of moral fortitude.

In those territories which were late in embracing the Allied cause because of the cowardice of the civil or military authorities, the natives reacted in the same way. The Chief of the Abrous, sovereign ruler over more than 200,000 people on the Ivory Coast (West Africa), joined the service of Free France, together with his sons and his guard. The Mogho Naba, Chief of the Mossi tribes, which number one million men, became increasingly suspect to the Dakar authorities, because he exhorted his people to resist the Armistice, finally expressing his protest by committing suicide. Before dying, he made his son and successor promise that he would not assume power until "the true French would come back." "Tirailleurs" who escaped from French West Africa, reached the Cameroons and French Equatorial Africa, with only one desire — to join a fighting unit. Thus, in spite of all kinds of pressure, of loss of prestige, notwithstanding the economic stagnation caused by the impossibility of selling local produce and the stoppage of supplies, the native populations of French West Africa remained faithful to the France they had loved, the liberal, the true France.

In those tragic moments, Continental Africa demonstrated two things: that the native societies were not

merely administrative entities, delineated upon a map, or fixed arbitrarily by decrees and resolutions, that they constituted real social, geographic and political bodies, having specific characteristic reactions of their own; it showed, on the other hand, that the members of these Negro societies were much more mature in political and French national matters than they appeared to be.

In the territories under Free French control it was even easier to draw conclusions and to act accordingly, in view of the fact that the Governor-General of French Equatorial Africa was Félix Eboué, the first French colored Governor, who had spent in that territory 25 years of his career as an administrator. Among other things, the development of the cultivation of cotton and of the diamond mining in French Equatorial Africa had been due to his tenacity and to his experience.

From the viewpoint of its native policy as well as of its economic development, the French Cameroons, a territory under a League of Nations mandate, which had been given a great deal of attention since 1918, was well ahead of French Equatorial Africa, that Cinderella of the French colonies. The policy of the administration in the Cameroons had aimed at increasing the participation of the native population in the management of public affairs, as well as at promoting a respect for and the modernization of local customs. In accordance with this tendency, a decree dated May 4, 1942, established an Economic and Financial Consultative Council. It comprises at present delegates from the War Veterans, the native members of the Administrative Council, and six other native notables. A permanent Commission of seven members, among them two natives, has been established with a view to collaborating with the administration. The first task of this Council has been to examine and to vote upon a biennial program of public works, the cost of which amounts to approximately 100 million francs.

On the other hand, a ruling adopted in July, 1943, established a definite status for the native personnel in all branches of the administrative services, providing them with the same guarantees regarding their career as in the case of the European members of the administration. A decree adopted on January 7, 1944, dealing also with labor problems, provided adequate protection for the native workers.

With regard to French Equatorial Africa, much more essential changes were imperative, and Governor-General Eboué proceeded to carry them into effect. As early as February, 1941, he initiated a policy of decentralization which enabled the chiefs of the four territories and the "chefs de circonscription" to implement their administration much more effectively; in addition, the post of High Commissioner was created in Free Africa pursuant to the same decentralization policy. Endowed with considerable powers, it contributed to facilitate the relations between the colony and the central administration in London.

In his *Circular* of November 8, 1942, M. Eboué defined the principles followed by his administration, as well as the aims and means of his native policy.<sup>1</sup>

His basic proposition was that the native is a person having historic traditions and specific needs of his own which do not correspond to those of the European, and that it would not be sufficient to make him adopt a modern outlook and way of life in order to ensure his progress and happiness; that his traditions and customs should also be respected.

M. Eboué agrees with Marshall Lyautey, and he believes, like the latter, that the administration must be carried into effect with the help and through the medium of the members of the natural élite: chiefs, notables, educated natives and native institutions, guided and advised by the French administrators in their everyday dealings.

In such a manner, the native society progresses by gradual transitions, under French influence, and applies a modern viewpoint to all the fields of its material and spiritual life: family life, everyday administration of the village or the tribe, common law tribunals, agriculture, trade. . . . Gradually, and as soon as possible, native representative bodies must be created, and educated natives must be entrusted with increasingly greater responsibilities.

The aim of M. Eboué's policy is consequently not to transform the natives into citizens in the likeness of French Metropolitan citizens, but first to make them good citizens of their own country, a prerequisite for their harmonious progress and gradual integration into a large French community.

This idea of respect for native culture was not new in French overseas policy: it has been scrupulously and successfully applied in Morocco and the Levant, and in part in Indo-China. But the *Circular* by Governor-General Eboué certainly constitutes the first document defining the reasons for this policy and the methods by which it could be realized and especially introducing it as the official doctrine. It elucidates finally and unequivocally the meaning of the word "assimilation," a meaning which it had usually had in practical administration, although not always in the official texts, namely: that the evolution of the colonies must never tend to a separation from the mother country, but that it must be aimed at strengthening the bonds which tie all colonial territories together with Metropolitan France, with a view to forming one single national entity, one and indivisible. The soil, the land of each and every colony is assimilated to the Metropolitan soil in the most direct sense, since French sovereignty extends to it with the same plenitude and completeness of rights.

But it is impossible to contemplate in the case of Continental Africa an assimilation to the customs and mentality of Metropolitan France, along the same lines as this had taken place in the French West Indies after three centuries of common life: on the one hand, Con-

tinental Africa cannot afford to wait for two or three centuries of slow and sure evolution; on the other hand, it possesses original cultures which can easily be modernized within the general framework of French culture and sovereignty.

In full agreement with General de Gaulle, M. Eboué applied himself to the immediate realization of this doctrine; among other measures, he established a special political status for the more progressive natives, and entrusted them with part of the municipal administration in certain villages and towns.

## BRAZZAVILLE CONFERENCE

Thus, at the time when all the French African territories were finally reunited under the same central authority in Alger, the question of revising the methods of native policy, and of colonization in general, was already on the way to a solution and provided with a choice of practical means of realization.

Shortly after the creation of the French Committee of National Liberation, a Colonial Conference was called at Brazzaville with the purpose of examining all the problems involved — regional, colonial and national — and of outlining possible solutions in the light of the needs revealed by the war, and of limitations caused by isolation from Metropolitan France.

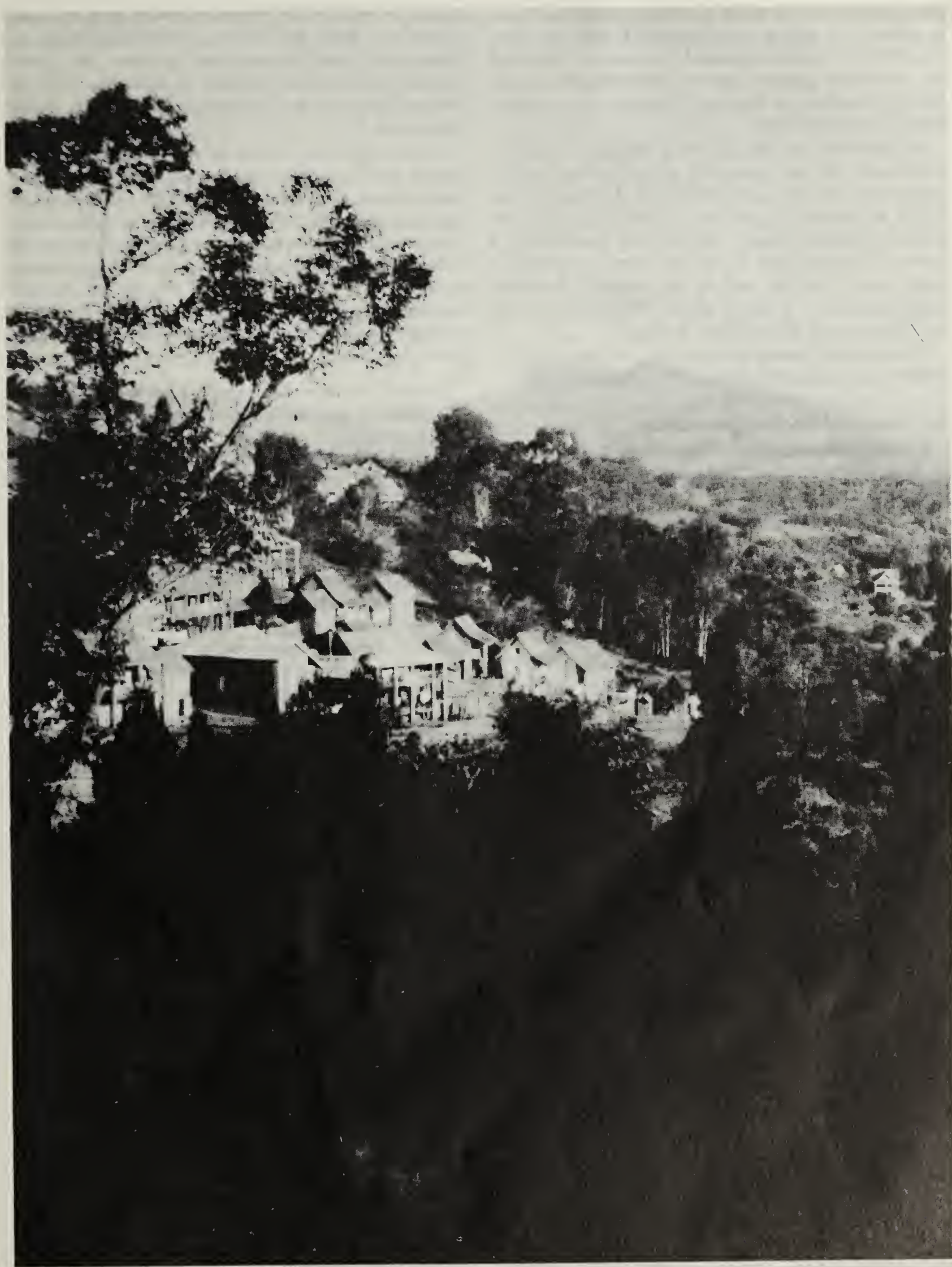
The task facing the Conference was clear: elaboration by experts of the materials for modern legislation appropriate to the needs of Black Africa's evolution, and definition of its place and role in the French community.

The Conference was presided over by M. Pleven, Commissioner of Colonies; M. Laurentie, Governor of Colonies, acted as Secretary-General; M. Peter, Inspector of Colonies, as Assistant Secretary-General of the Conference. The Conference was attended by 18 Governors-General and Governors, representing French West Africa, French Equatorial Africa, the Cameroons, Somaliland, Madagascar and adjoining islands, Réunion, as well as by the President and members of the Alger Consultative Assembly, observers from Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco, officials from the Office of the Commissioner of Colonies, in all 44 members.

The Conference began its work on Monday, January 31, 1944. The first meeting was devoted to organizing and elaborating a program of work. It was decided that the plenary sessions should be held each morning, and that the afternoons would be reserved to prepare the following meetings. Seven committees were formed: Education, Hygiene and Public Health, Social Security, Family and Labor Problems, Administrative Reform, Personnel, Economic and Customs Problems.

The general problems submitted to the Assembly were presented in the reports of the Governors-General to the various committees. The latter studied these reports and submitted their conclusions to the plenary Assembly,

1. See Appendix II, *General Circular* of November 8, 1942.



*Olive Murray Chapman*

*Fianarantsoa — situated in the southeast of Madagascar.*

after deliberations in which all members were given an opportunity to express their opinion. Finally the Commissioner of Colonies expressed his point of view, and the Assembly prepared its recommendations to the French Committee of National Liberation, to be formulated by the committees.

Recommendations dealing with problems of secondary importance will be formulated at the earliest possible convenience of the Commissioner in Alger or of the Chiefs of territories, according to their respective competence. Recommendations dealing with questions of a general character, such as the accession to citizenship rights, can be decided only by the National Assembly, embodying the will of the entire French nation, after the liberation of Metropolitan France.

The principal results achieved by the Assembly, are summed up in the following recommendations:

### **1st Part: Political Organization**

#### ***Political Organization of the French Colonies —***

In view of the complex problems involved, the representation of the colonies in a new French Constitution can be studied adequately only by a commission of experts, designated by the Government.

It appears, however, that these experts should take into consideration the following principles to guide and inspire their work:

1. *It is desirable and even indispensable that the colonies be represented in the future Assembly whose task will be to draw up the new Constitution of France.*

This representation must be in keeping with the importance of the colonies in the French community. Their importance is no longer questionable in view of the services they have rendered the nation during this war.

2. *It is indispensable to ensure that the colonies be represented in the central government in Metropolitan France in a much more comprehensive and much more effective manner than in the past.*

3. *Any project of reform which would aim merely at an amelioration of the system of representation existing on September first, 1939 (colonial Deputies and Senators in the French Parliament, Supreme Council of France Overseas) appears a priori to be inadequate and sterile.*

The same consideration would apply in particular to an increase of the number of colonial Deputies and Senators in the French Metropolitan Parliament, as well as to new seats which might be granted to colonies not represented at present.

4. In any case, the new body to be created, Colonial Parliament or, preferably Federal Assembly, must fulfill the following purposes: *Proclaim and guarantee the indissoluble political unity of the French world — respect the regional life and freedom of each of the territories members of the bloc, composed of France and her colonies (or "French Federation," if this term is ac-*

cepted, in spite of the objections which may be raised against it). With this in view it will be necessary to define, with great accuracy and precision, the power reserved to the central authority or federating body on the one hand, and those allotted to the colonies, on the other hand.

5. The legislative regime of the colonies or, to use a more specific terminology, the respective fields of the laws, decrees and regulations, will be adequately determined only after the adoption of the decisions which will establish on a new basis the powers of the central authority or federating body, and those of the various territories. *Special emphasis will be laid on the fact that the colonies should gradually advance on the way leading from administrative decentralization to a status of political personality.*

#### ***Internal Political Organization of the Colonies —***

The chiefs of the colonies must exercise as much initiative as possible in their internal administration. With this in view, bodies of political expression must be created which will provide them with a *perfectly balanced and legitimate representative system toward the European administration as well as toward the native population.*

It is consequently suggested that the existing consultative bodies be abolished and replaced:

— In the first place, by Councils of subdivision and Regional Councils, composed of native notables and availing themselves, whenever possible, of the framework provided by existing traditional institutions;

— Secondly, by representative Assemblies, composed partly of Europeans, partly of natives.

*The members of these bodies would be elected by universal suffrage wherever and whenever this would be practicable.* In all other cases, they will be co-opted. Exceptionally, a small number of European native members, known for their competence or for their services, will be designated by the Governor.

The powers of the Councils of subdivision and the Regional Councils would be consultative; those of the Assemblies would be *deliberative with regard to voting on the budget and establishing the programs for new works, and consultative with regard to all matters which are subject to the legislative and executive authority belonging to the Governor.* In addition, Administrative Councils, composed exclusively of functionaries, would assist the Governor with the application of the regulations.

### **2nd Part: Social Problems**

***The Constitutive Elements of the Colonial Society — the Respective Place of the Europeans and of the Natives in Colonization —*** Our entire colonial policy will be based upon the respect and the progress of the native society, and we shall have to accept fully and absolutely the demands and consequences implied by this principle. The natives may not be treated as devoid

of human dignity, they can be subjected neither to eviction nor to exploitation. However, the colonies are destined, by their very nature, to be inhabited jointly by both Europeans and natives. Although our policy must be subordinated to the full development of the local races, we must also give European activity the place to which it is entitled.

1. *The prerequisite for the progress of the African continent is the development of the native populations.* The activity of the Europeans and other non-Africans in the colonial territories of Africa must conform to this condition.

2. On the other hand, this progress of the African continent, as it is being contemplated, *cannot be achieved in the near future without the collaboration of non-African persons and enterprises to a much greater extent and in greater proportion than at the present time.* Consequently, all necessary talent, ability and services will be duly enlisted and utilized.

3. *Precise conditions regarding the health, morality, professional competence and, in certain territories and for certain activities, also financial requirements, will be demanded as a prerequisite for integrating non-African persons and enterprises within the plan of economic organization of the African territories.* These conditions will be in keeping with the plan of organization of each territory.

4. All the various trades must gradually be taken over by the natives. *The Governors-General and the Governors of the territories shall establish, within a brief period, an inventory of the enterprises which will be progressively opened to the natives.*

*It is particularly desirable in all the African colonies that the responsibility of the executive branch of the administration be assumed, as rapidly as possible, by the natives, regardless of their personal status.*

5. *The education of the natives will be directed towards this progressive accession to public office.* Proper selection and adequate training will be the dominant tendency in this field.

6. The necessity for training replacement personnel, as well as the realization of the reforms recommended in all domains by the French African Conference at Brazzaville, make it imperative to launch, immediately upon the liberation of France, large-scale recruitment in order to meet the needs of the administrative personnel as well as of the new colonial economy. *The colonies must be able to rely on the young generation of the Resistance, whose members will find overseas tasks worthy of their talents and of their efficiency.*

The preparation of Metropolitan candidates for colonial functions must be guided. *One or several universities bearing the imprint of the colonial idea and devoted to colonial enterprise, will provide adequate cultural and educational training for the candidates.*

7. The European worker must enjoy in the colonies *a status at least equal to that of a worker of the same category in Metropolitan France.*

8. The Conference recommends that *a mission be sent to Russia to study the Kolkhose regime.*

### *Organization of the Native Society*

*The Traditional Institutions — the Elite* — Having reached this stage of its study, the Conference had to take into consideration the fact that the native society consists of two elements: on the one hand, the bulk of the population, which has remained faithful to its traditional institutions, based upon custom; on the other hand, an élite which has progressed as a result of its contact with us.

*The traditional political institutions should be maintained, not because of their intrinsic value, but because they provide a framework, through the medium of which municipal and regional life can be expressed even now, as fully as possible. The Administration must follow and control the functioning of these institutions, so as to direct their evolution towards a rapid accession of the natives to political responsibility.* The principles laid down by Governor-General Eboué, in his *Circular* of November 8, 1941, are recommended to the Administrators as providing a sure and tested method to achieve this result.

The aim of the Decree of July 29, 1942, which established the status of the "notables évolués" in French Equatorial Africa, was to formulate and to confirm the rights and duties of the native élite which had already come into being. This Decree is proposed as a model to be followed by all the colonies of North Africa. It should be understood, however, that this text is not a rigid frame, and that the solutions to be adopted in each territory, must take into account the specific local conditions.

As regards the establishment of a local or of an Empire citizenship, an adequate study of this question will have to be postponed until after the adoption of a decision concerning the representative institutions to be created in each territory. Especial care must be exercised in order not to establish a status which would not carry with it real prerogatives, but would merely satisfy the vanity of the local populations.

*Social and Family Customs* — The native family represents an element of social stability which it would be unwise to undermine. *It appears nevertheless as possible and desirable to introduce without delay the notion of freedom of marriage which means properly the freedom of the woman.*

It is therefore suggested that the Administrators especially devote their personal attention to the following questions: the preliminary consent of the nubile girl or woman to be married, the dowry problem, that of "marriage fraud" and of successive marriages. *The efforts of the Administrators in this field should be aimed constantly at favoring an evolution of the various customs towards a status of liberty and dignity for the woman.* As regards more particularly large-scale polygamy, it is indispensable that this scourge of Continental



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*A Batéké woman, Brazzaville area.*

Africa be resisted by the Administrators with all the means at their disposal.

In matters relating to native justice, a distinction is to be made between those involving individual or family status, civil and commercial affairs, and penal matters.

*With regard the matters involving the individual or family status, the constant supervision of the administration is recommended, with a view to controlling the evolution of custom.*

*With regard to civil and commercial affairs, it is preferable that for the time being, they should remain under the jurisdiction of the common law; inasmuch as possible, these affairs should be decided upon by native judges only, sitting in first instance.*

*With regard to penal matters on the contrary, it appears that, in the present state of the local customs, penal legislation cannot be based upon native customs and traditions. It is recommended that a penal code be formulated, whose validity would extend over the entire African continent; it should be drawn along lines similar to those of the penal code of French West Africa, modified and improved in the light of subsequent administrative experience.*

The gradual abolition of the ordinary sanctions of the "Indigénat" must be effected as soon as the hostilities are over.

**Public Education** — 1. The education of the African natives must, on the one hand, reach the masses and teach them how to live a better life; on the other hand, it must accomplish a sure and rapid selection of the élite.

2. Girls' education must be treated with the same attention and care as that of the boys. Both must follow a parallel development, if a lack of balance which would be fatal to native society and family life, is to be avoided.

3. The mass education of the natives can be undertaken and carried into effect only through the establishment of schools in all the villages which possess at least fifty boys and girls of school age; the prerequisite being the training of native teachers, men as well as women, in teachers' colleges, to be established as soon as possible.

4. In accordance with the extension of mass education, as contemplated above, and the selection of the élite, there shall be established in all Overseas territories vocational schools, advanced primary schools, and specialized educational institutions necessary for the formation of a native élite which will have to assume an increasingly greater number of responsibilities and occupy positions in trade, industry and administration.

**Labor Regime** — Although the prosecution of the war effort demands that the present labor regime be temporarily maintained, the Conference is nevertheless unanimous in proclaiming the unconditional superiority of the freedom of labor; the local authorities will be allowed a maximum period of five years for restoring it.

In conformity with this same desire to give labor in Africa the place of honor to which it is entitled, the Conference makes the following recommendations:

1. The institution of an obligatory one-year Labor Service for natives from 20 to 21 years, physically fit, but who have not been drafted in the first part of the military contingent; those natives would be exempted from this Labor Service who can prove that they have been employed by a private individual for 18 months;

2. The establishment of Social Security which would ensure the native a pension after having worked for 15 to 20 years. This measure should apply to all categories of native workers;

3. Regular observance of the weekly rest day;

4. The daily work fixed at eight hours;

5. Respect for all the religious beliefs of the workers, whether Christian, Moslem or Fetishist;

6. Interdiction to retain part of the salary without the Administration's consent.

7. The right for the wife to accompany her husband to his place of work.

With this in view, and in order to achieve a really effective control of the native labor as defined above, it is recommended that a specialized staff of labor inspectors be created, working under the Ministry of Colonies. These inspectors must possess both the necessary technical competence and an experience of colonial administration.

The development of workers' guilds is also to be considered as an effective means towards the amelioration of the native workman's status.

**Medical and Health Services** — 1. The improvement of sanitary conditions and the solution of the birth rate problem are not merely technical matters, they depend also on the economic, social and political progress of the entire African continent.

2. It is indispensable to enable French and foreign medical authorities in Africa to exchange their views as completely as possible. The foreign governments should be approached with a proposal concerning the creation of a permanent common Office of Health; such an Office would make possible the rapid transmission of epidemiologic information and would permit the elaboration of common methods of hygiene and prophylaxis to be applied to the whole of the African continent.

3. The constant presence of about 600 doctors will be necessary to ensure the functioning of such a service. Taking into consideration Metropolitan as well as colonial military necessities, the total doctors personnel of the colonial medical corps must be increased to 1,500. If the utilization of army doctors were to be abandoned, the creation of a colonial medical school should be contemplated. Conceived along the same lines as the Bordeaux Medical School, it would be part of a colonial University, and would attract young students from the very start of their medical studies, inspire them with faith and enthusiasm and with the discipline and sacrifice

which are absolutely necessary to those who practice colonial medicine.

4. The development of the Public Health services depends not only on an increase in the number of native doctors, but also upon raising their technical and moral level. It is indispensable to increase the staff of African doctors from their present number of 700 to 2,500. At present they are trained in three schools at Dakar, Tananarive and Ayos. The result of this diversity of training is that the medical programs, the duration of the studies and even the very title of the medical men who graduate from these schools, are actually different.

It is advocated that a great medical school be established, whose role in Africa would correspond to that of the Hanoï Medical College in the Far East. It would form a vast reserve of physicians destined to serve in any part of African territory.

5. The realization of the proposed plan for health services implies, as a necessary condition, an increase in the number of native midwives, the recruitment and training in the local schools of a personnel of medical assistants, hospital nurses and visiting nurses.

### **3rd Part: Economic Questions**

The aim of our colonial economic policy must be to develop production and to bring prosperity to the territories overseas, *with a view to ensuring a better life for the Africans by increasing their purchasing power and by raising their standard of living.*

It has been observed that under the pressure of circumstances, the colonies had been forced to abandon a trading system which was too exclusive; pending the possibility of establishing a policy of coordination with Metropolitan France, and with a view to maintaining the economic equilibrium of the Overseas territories, it is necessary to settle by the conclusion of a general agreement with our Allies, the problems connected with the supplying of provisions to the colonies and to liberated France, the export of colonial products, and the necessity for placing at our disposal adequate transport facilities.

**Industrialization of the Colonies** — The following propositions may be considered as firmly established:

1. that the industrialization of a country, increasing the purchasing power of its inhabitants, cannot but contribute to its progress;

2. that this industrialization will, however, encounter additional difficulties. These difficulties which are inherent in local conditions and which concern labor as well as material, are liable to reduce the margin which could enable the colonies to hold out against outside competition without applying more or less openly a regime of protection. For this reason it is suggested that the following considerations be taken into account:

The industrialization of colonial territories is to be encouraged. Industrialization should proceed methodically and carefully by gradual development, within the

strict limits imposed by the application of the plan for general production. With this in view, it will be subjected to the regime of prior authorization and of the control of its production by the public authorities. Subject to these reservations, industrialization will be effected by private enterprise.

The Administration will contribute towards the success of private initiative by: assuming the cost of model plants whose usefulness will have been demonstrated in the course of experiment; assisting the industries which are not self-supporting, although of vital importance for the country; creating experimental and research centers placed at the disposal of industrialists for all research, or control of manufacture.

**Agriculture** — It is recommended that the quality of products be improved by imposing high standards for agricultural produce and by conducting scientific research work through the medium of agricultural services and of specialized institutions placed under the control of one central organization for all the colonies.

It is recommended that immediate measures be adopted to restore the fertility of the tropical soil, exhausted by careless exploitation which did not devote sufficient attention to the damages caused by erosion.

It is requested that each colony draw up a list of orders for agricultural machinery to be distributed among the native population.

In addition, *it is proposed that an "Institute of Agricultural Research of French Africa" be established in the near future in one of our territories and provided with the necessary means and equipment.* This Institute would constantly carry on research which will improve the quality of colonial products and enable them safely to meet foreign competition. A School of Tropical Agriculture should be annexed to the Institute, with a view to training experts in agriculture, cattle breeding and forestry, who would serve in the administration as well as in private undertakings.

**Public Works** — It is recommended:

1. That the colonies submit within four months a tentative estimate of the personnel, equipment, materials and supplies which will be necessary to ensure, after the conclusion of hostilities, the functioning of public services, railways, ports, and of road and river transports, on the assumption that activity and traffic would be maintained at their present level.

2. That the improvement and extension of the network of trails be studied with the greatest care; in the course of their construction extensive use should be made of mechanized equipment, and the most appropriate and economical methods used for the surfacing of trails and roads. In view of the high cost of the latter, the possibility of the construction of a railway should be given careful consideration in all cases in which the traffic is sufficiently important to justify the building of permanent tracks.



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*Native huts in Bambari, Ubangi-Chari, where M. Eboué was one of the first administrators*

3. That the railway's elaborate programs of modernization, including the improvement and reinforcement of tracks and the replacement of railroad cars and locomotives, be carried out.

4. That the improvement, extension and equipment of the principal ports be vigorously continued at the same time as the supplying of secondary ports with equipment and machinery required in order to meet their specific needs.

5. That river communications, which constitute the most economical method of transportation, be thoroughly studied and that an inventory be established regarding their potential capacity.

In view of the fact that colonial engineers frequently do not have either the necessary time or means to follow the development of technical progress, it appears desirable to establish central organizations or to subordinate the colonial services to Metropolitan institutions, in all cases warranted by technical difficulties.

**Telecommunications** — Structural reforms in the organization of colonial telecommunications are urgent and indispensable. These reforms must take into account, on the one hand, the fact that telecommunications constitute a network, and on the other hand, the necessity for unified command in each colony. In keeping with these considerations, reforms must be based upon a

*very considerable centralization in the technical field, accompanied by a concentration of resources in the local perspective.*

The recruitment of specialists in colonial transmissions should be intensified and improved; all the services of telecommunications, situated in the territory of one colony, should be coordinated under the direction of one qualified chief responsible to the local authority; a close contact should be maintained between the local services and the central authority by frequent technical inspections.

**Customs Regime** — The colonies should be granted a more liberal and more flexible regime, capable of adapting itself to the hazards and fluctuations of world economy as well as to the needs of various territories, which are too different from each other to be subjected to uniform regulations or tariffs. *Consequently, the customs duties, exemptions from customs duties and prohibitions of import or export should be decided upon after deliberation by the qualified organizations in each colony or territory. These deliberations must be ratified by decrees signed by the Minister of Colonies himself after consultation with the competent ministerial departments. If no decision is adopted within three months by the Minister, the decision of the local colonial organizations is considered ratified.*

*The Editors.*



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*Tomorrow, another road will cross the rain-forest. As early as 1940,  
this road contributed its share to victory.*

## APPENDIX I

### *Memorandum on Colonial Administration*

*The following is a translation of a Memorandum issued for general circulation on January 19, 1941, by M. Félix Eboué, Governor-General of French Equatorial Africa, with a foreword by Sir Bernard Bourdillon, G.C.M.G., K.B.E., Governor of British Nigeria.*

**Foreword** — Lagos, March 15, 1941 — *Monsieur Eboué, Governor-General of French Equatorial Africa, was the first active supporter of the Free French movement in the higher ranks of the colonial administration and it owes an immense debt to his energy and courage. In the memorandum to which I write this foreword he has outlined some of the principles which will guide his administration in the two complementary tasks which he has undertaken, i.e., of infusing new spirit into French colonial methods and of equipping French Equatorial Africa to take an active part in the struggle for the liberation of France.*

*It is impossible to read Monsieur Eboué's memorandum without feeling that it also contains food for thought for British colonial officials. The stresses of war not only confront us with new responsibilities but provide the stimulus and the opportunity to examine and overhaul methods which in time of peace may be too readily taken for granted and the comment early in Monsieur Eboué's memorandum that it would be a poor system which deferred necessary reforms until the day of victory expresses a truth which none should overlook. Moreover, now more than ever, it behooves those of us who are privileged to work in the Colonial Empire to do all we can to ensure that standards of British Colonial Administration are kept at a high and worthy level.*

*It was in the belief that Monsieur Eboué's memorandum would stimulate thought and endeavor along these lines that I sought his permission, readily given, to have it translated and printed for circulation in Nigeria. I warmly commend the memorandum to the attention of Nigerian officers of all branches of the administration and of whatever rank.*

### *Memorandum for General Circulation*

January 19, 1941 — General de Gaulle has done me the honor to appoint me to the Governor-Generalship of French Equatorial Africa. The significance of this promotion is unmistakable. The will to carry on the war, a firm refusal to admit defeat, the clear realization of the impasse to which the habit of compromise has inevitably brought France and her Empire; all this, which has been so strongly typified in Chad and in the whole of French Equatorial Africa, constitutes the fundamental conception of General de Gaulle. Therein lies our natural bond with him, sharing as we do a common aim to reconquer France and save her Empire.

Faced with the alternative of capitulation or war, we have chosen war. Today, therefore, there is no escape from that fact for any of us. Whatever our job may be there is no alternative but to devote our utmost energies and our every thought to the prosecution of the war.

Yet the resolve to continue the war should not prevent us from carrying on the work of administration. Quite the contrary. It would be a poor system which deferred all necessary reform until the day of victory.

Officials, including even those concerned with questions of national defense, were satisfied they had done their duty if, by occupying their desks for the requisite number of hours each day, they were able to forward to the so-called "competent" authority a periodical report compiled from other periodical reports which had in their turn been compiled by other official departments in which a similar spirit prevailed. The inevitable consequence of such a system, in which the best could find no

scope, was a spirit of indifference leading ultimately to hypocrisy. We have had experience of this fundamental vice in this very colony, though the geographical layout of its administrative divisions should have made it impossible. It is our business today to uproot it from Equatorial Africa altogether, not only for the good of the colony itself, but also because Equatorial Africa, the first French territory to become free, must be the source from which example and progressive thought will gradually spread throughout the Empire, ultimately reaching France and thus assuring her internal re-birth after the reconquest.

We shall endeavor to re-establish responsibility in all grades of the service. Each man must recognize certain responsibilities as being his alone, with the knowledge that it is his duty, according to his rank and functions, to act on his own initiative for the common good. In the service of the colony each must understand the need for discipline, but also of cultivating a vigorous sense of responsibility worthy of the principles of liberty. Decentralization is essential if we are to achieve this aim. General de Gaulle has already authorized the High Commissioner to enact legislation regarding matters which were formerly the monopoly of the home Government. Similarly, it is the Governor-General's intention that the normal powers of Governors serving under him should be restored in full and that they should enjoy entire and individual freedom in the execution of general instructions. An official order will very shortly be issued to ratify this reform.

The re-affirmation of the importance of personality in the system of administration is only one of the gains of the peaceful but profound revolution which we shall accomplish. We must likewise overcome the selfish spirit which has been one of the most serious defects in French society and which must now give place, both in war and in the peace which will follow, to one of solidarity, generosity and sacrifice.

It would not be correct to say that France failed because she was too much addicted to pleasure and enjoyment; but it is certain that, as conditions of life before the war grew narrower and more restricted for Frenchmen, our country became paralysed by a narrow egoism, each person's sole pre-occupation being to preserve at any cost the few goods which remained to him. Yet there is no doubt that, given a spirit of mutual sacrifice, all could have been saved both within and without.

Against this blind egoism we shall strive with all the more vigor knowing that France today is suffering and in want. All the proudest claims to have remained true to France would be no excuse, when we return, for having spent the war in a condition of even relative ease.

Some of us have the privilege, the value of which we must never forget, of having our wives and children here, far from the menace of the enemy. But if others know the sadness and anxiety of separation we all have the advantage of an untroubled daily existence which we must justify by throwing all our efforts into the struggle.

Our anxiety to continue the war with all our strength and all our ardor must not make us forget the needs of the colony from which the war is being continued. The natives of Equatorial Africa, realizing that a different French policy might have led to oppression, have given us many proofs of their affection. Yet the difficulties of the present time make it more than ever necessary to maintain a sound native administration. Self-seeking chiefs, who have distorted the meaning of French protection of African peoples and who have forced Africans to surrender their most vital interests and even to fight against their native land, will one day have the consequences of their conduct brought home to them.

There is no doubt that it will fall to Free France to repair the harm done in this way and to re-establish that French unity which, given even a little sincerity, need never have been disturbed.

Very soon I shall address instructions to the Heads of Territories on the methods which I propose to follow as regards native communities.

The natives too have a fatherland and this fatherland is symbolized and maintained for them by political institutions, however rudimentary they may be. Even the corrupt practices of a legitimate chief are, in their eyes, preferable to the lack of a chief, because his subjects feel that in obeying him they are at home. Economic individualism, on the contrary, while appearing to favor the native brings him no real benefit; he may have acquired a measure of comfort but, on the other hand, the real meaning of his life is lost to him.

The Director of Medical Services, General Sicé, whose wide experience of the country is undeniable, has observed that wherever individualism has been grafted onto native society the practice of abortion becomes common. That is the physical sign of a dissolution the effect of which in the end is to produce a type of "proletariat," quite well dressed perhaps, but wretched at heart and coming ultimately to have the reactions of a mass of individuals, lacking cohesion and with nothing left in the world to which they can attach themselves. Then we shall be forced to admit that we have not brought them the universal infallible talisman, the touch of which assures happiness, but that on the contrary we have encouraged them to abandon their own lands, their huts or their tents, their customs and their chiefs,

their confidence in life and any taste they may have had for real progress.

I know how liable at times administrators are to chafe against the delays and faults of native administration, how often they are tempted in haste to cut what appears to them a Gordian knot. They should struggle against this tendency, praiseworthy in itself though it may be, and remind themselves that more has been achieved by the preservation of a society true to itself, than by attempting to improve it under conditions which are no longer natural.

Equatorial Africa, with the Cameroons, has re-entered the war with grim determination after learning a hard lesson. In the war of tomorrow, as in the peace of tomorrow, we mean by our efforts to set a high example. Having rid ourselves of evil habits and illusions we shall win the right, not only to sit in judgment on traitors and to get rid of the self-willed, but also to take our place beside our martyred families on the glorious day of victory.

We assert again that, now and always, we will keep faith with our allies and will uphold the honor of France. England and Belgium, with their Empires, will find in this unconquered part of the French Empire the same resolve to destroy the enemy which animates them. Like them we shall know how to express it with the same courage and the same spirit.

(Signed) Félix Eboué



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*"Many of the children will remain in the village, where their education will, however, be continued."  
(Félix Eboué)*

## APPENDIX II

### *General Circular on Native Policy*

**Foreword** — *When reading Governor-General Eboué's Circular on native policy, one should keep in mind that it was intended for the use of French colonial administrators, and not as a report to the general public, giving the balance sheet of French colonial policy in Continental Africa, with its assets as well as its liabilities. Having in view reforms to be applied and defects to be corrected rather than the distribution of praise for what had already been accomplished, Governor-General Eboué's Circular may well give the impression that the liability side of France's colonial policy in Continental Africa outweighs the assets.*

*First of all, it should be kept in mind that Governor General Eboué's criticisms do not apply specifically to the shortcomings of French colonial policy in Africa, but to the whole colonial system as practiced by the capitalistic minded colonial powers. Governor-General Eboué is proposing less a series of specific reforms than a completely new basis for the colonial policy of Western powers. Any vestige in the present colonial methods remaining from the time when the main purpose of colonization was the exploitation of the natives must be ruthlessly eradicated.*

*On the other hand, and although the starting point of French colonial policy is implicitly criticized in Governor-General Eboué's memorandum, France prides herself in having dealt on the whole with the natives of Continental Africa in such a manner as to prepare them progressively to play a role as responsible individuals in the management of their own affairs. The complete loyalty shown to the French by the natives of their Continental African dominions after France's crushing military reverse of 1940 bears testimony to the human relationship between the white colonist and the black native.*

*Finally, one must remember that the following Circular deals with a state of affairs that existed prior to 1941 and that, during the three years that have elapsed since it was written — thanks primarily to the foresight and the dynamism of its author — French Continental Africa has already made much headway on the road along which Governor-General Eboué had for the last 25 years, dreamt of leading it.*

#### **I — The Requirements and Principles of a Native Policy**

French Equatorial Africa has reached a decisive moment in her history. It is useless to dwell on the errors of the past; we have better things to do than to criticise and regret. An already long experience and the lessons of the war permit us to sum up our achievements and our failures and to see clearly the colonization program which is prescribed for us. We know what we must do, and we know how to do it.

Unfortunately, we shall not be able to put this program into operation as rapidly as we would like. Although our financial resources are adequate, personnel and equipment are lacking, and money alone cannot produce them. The men are mobilised, and as for the equipment, we shall be able to purchase only the surplus left over from a war industry that is becoming more and more intensified. This does not mean that we shall sit back with our arms folded. On the contrary, no opportunity shall be neglected, and there is always an opportunity for those who are patient and determined. Therefore, since the program itself cannot be instituted now, we must take advantage of every possibility to prepare the ground for our future action. Let us apply ourselves to this task together; together, let us make certain that French Equatorial Africa, instead of being served by France as was too often the case in the past, will tomorrow be in a position to serve France.

The primary requisite for the success of our undertaking is a healthy, settled, and peaceful population, a population which grows numerically and materially, intellectually and morally, and from whom we can expect the cooperation and assistance without which the development of the colony is bound to remain but another catchword. If we fail to achieve this objective, our only choice will be between utter helplessness, which spells ruin, and the installation in the colony of a foreign race which will supplant the tribes born of the soil. Our pride precludes the first alternative, our conscience and basic interest forbid the second.

Thus the preliminary and urgent task which confronts us is to establish native society upon such foundations as finally to enable the colony to advance on the road to prosperity. But the Administration alone is not concerned with this task. If we are to succeed, all elements of the colony will have to participate in it. Equatorial Africa, as a whole, shall have *her* native policy; this policy, embodying the thought and will of everyone, industrialists, settlers, missionaries, merchants and officials, will survive any change in regime. When, twenty or thirty years from now, its results are appraised, it will be recognized that this policy was not born of one man's fancy but of the unanimous resolve of a team who, determined to redeem and liberate France, decided also to save French Equatorial Africa.

I say "save," and that is what I mean. The colony is indeed threatened, threatened from within, like a granary that is slowly being emptied. Whatever the cause may be — whether the continued system of large concessions, uncontrolled economic exploitation, a sometimes clumsy proselytism, the slumbering educational system, or finally and mainly the oblivion, one might even say the contempt, in which the native political and social organization has been kept — we face the tangible consequence: a population which does not increase in some sectors, and diminishes in others; a country which cannot provide its commerce, its workshops, its administration with the strictly indispensable auxiliary personnel and qualified foremen. We are faced with a population in the process of disintegration and dispersion; voluntary abortions and syphilis are becoming widespread among the new working class; in short, all the combined evils of an absurd individualism are being inflicted upon the colony.

I am willing to concede that better understood and better organized medical service, and more methodical moral instruction, public education and sanitation may partly correct these defects. However, the basic cause of the evil will remain untouched as long as a policy conceived for the population of the colony is not once and for all formulated and put into effect. And we shall define this policy together.

Any attempt to create or re-create a society in our own image, or even in conformity with our mental habits, is bound to fail. The natives have habits, laws, a homeland of their own, which are unlike ours. We shall not ensure their happiness by applying to them the principles of the French Revolution, which is our Revolution, or the Napoleonic Code, which is our Code, or by substituting our government officials for their chiefs, because our officials will think instead of the natives, but they will neither think for them, nor express their viewpoint.

On the contrary, we shall ensure the mental equilibrium of the natives if we treat them, so to speak, from the inside, not as isolated and interchangeable individuals, but as human beings with traditions, as members of a family, a village or a tribe capable of progress within their own environment but very probably lost if they are removed from it. We shall concentrate on developing their consciousness of their own dignity and responsibility and on ensuring their prosperity, thus providing at the same time for their moral and their material progress; but we shall do this within the framework of the natives' natural institutions. If these institutions have deteriorated as a result of contact with us, we shall reorganize them, under new



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*Craftsmen at work in a Moslem village*



*Shepherds, typical of the Foulbé race, a pastoral people in French Africa numbering more than two million*

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forms necessarily, yet sufficiently close to the natives to preserve their attachment to their country, and to encourage them to demonstrate their ability to manage their own affairs. Then further steps can be taken. Briefly, we shall restore to the native what no man can be deprived of without harm; we shall make him no illusory gifts, but we shall restore to him the deepest meaning of life and the desire to perpetuate it.

## II — Political Institutions

Lyautey has shown us the way. Let us listen to his quotations from Lanessan, his first teacher in colonial affairs: "In every country there is an organized leadership, an élite. The great mistake for a European nation which enters such a country as a conqueror is to destroy this leadership. Deprived of this organization, the country becomes a prey to anarchy. You have to govern with the mandarin, and not against the mandarin. The Europeans do not have numerical superiority and cannot substitute themselves for the natives. But they must guide them." And Lyautey himself adds: "Consequently, it is imperative not to interfere with any tradition, not to change any custom. *In every society, there is a leading class, born for leadership and without which nothing can be accomplished.* It must be drawn into the orbit of our interests."

Guided by such a principle, we shall have, first of all, to consolidate or reinstate and, in all cases, to promote the political institutions of the natives. Let me make this clear: political customs are not to be considered as something fixed and immutable. Our aim is not to perpetuate museum curios. It is obvious that customs change and will change, and that it is not our purpose to make them sterile and stagnant. What we must do is penetrate the depth of their meaning and consider them as no less essential than the tradition and the feeling from which they originated. This tradition is that of the country or the tribe; this feeling is that of the homeland. To deprive the natives of these two driving forces of human life would be to take from them without any compensation. It would be as absurd as to take away from a French peasant his field, his vineyard, his cows and his vegetable garden and to make of him just another chain-worker whose job is to handle the products of an industrialized countryside.

Moreover, if we fail to consolidate the political institutions of the natives in their very foundation, this foundation itself will give way to unbridled individualism. And how shall we awaken this agglomeration of individuals to action? When I see impatient administrators install, dismiss, condemn native chiefs and replace them with others and thereby undermine traditional institutions, I cannot help feeling that they do not realize what will happen when these institutions will have lost, through their errors, all their effectiveness and their living spirit. I can tell them: the only means that will be left to remedy the decline of the natural authority will be to administer through native functionaries. Since the administrator in charge of a subdivision cannot possibly look after the well-being of all the inhabitants of the territory under his control, he will have to resort to native officials to act as intermediaries in place of the chiefs whom he will have lost. I leave it to the experience of those concerned to decide which is the better solution. If an ambitious administrator seeks to dispense with both chief and functionary, or at least to reduce the former as well as the latter to the role of mere puppets in his hands, of docile and efficient instruments of his will, I am sure that he is making a grave error, or in any event, that his successor will not be able to follow his practice. Continuation of the effort, when dependent upon the decisive superiority of one individual administrator, will be jeopardized the moment he departs. He will have built cathedrals on sand.

I have spoken of the chiefs. As a matter of fact, though the native institutions are frequently monarchies, this is not always the case. The nomadic tribes of the North, for example, actually live under a regime of organized anarchy. In the monarchic state itself the chief is not the sole political institution. His

power is modified, limited by more than one principle, by more than one tradition. None of these factors should be overlooked or rejected. No existing council should be abolished, no tutor dismissed, no religious law neglected, on the pretense that it is ridiculous, troublesome or immoral. The task is neither to deny nor to condemn what exists and what imports, but to make it evolve.

However, the institution of the chief is the most important, and we shall devote our greatest attention to him. Here a preliminary question arises: who is to be chief? I shall not answer, as was the custom in Athens: "The best." There is no best chief, there is just a chief, and we have no choice. I have already dealt with the frequent changes of chiefs; they are deplorable as well as preposterous. There is a chief designated by custom; he must be *recognized*. I use this term in its diplomatic sense. If we replace him arbitrarily, we divide the authority into two parts: the official authority and the real one; by this we deceive no one but ourselves; and if we have the illusion of obtaining more from *our chief*, we are unaware, most of the time, that he himself obeys the *real chief*, and that we have been cheated in the deal.

The chief is not interchangeable; when we depose him, public opinion does not confirm it; the chief pre-exists. This pre-existence frequently remains unknown to us, and often the most difficult thing is to discover the real chief. This is the task to which I want the Governors and the Administrators, from now on, to devote their efforts. I intend to see to it that the practice of placing in power upstarts, menials or native "tirailleurs" whose services must be rewarded, is discontinued once and for all (there are a thousand other ways to reward them). Moreover, it is my desire that the legitimate chiefs be sought out, wherever our ignorance has allowed them to go into hiding, and that they be reinstated in all their external dignity. I know what is being said: all that has disappeared; it is too late; we will only find miserable and despicable wretches from whom nothing whatever can be expected. It is my contention that this is not true; the occult power persists because it is the traditional power. It must be discovered, placed in the limelight, honored and educated. There can be no doubt as to the results.

In order to preserve the full practical value of this precept, the Governors in charge of the administration of territories shall henceforth see to it that no recognition — I insist on the word — be granted without a preliminary and thorough study made by the head of the subdivision and the head of the department; this study must prove conclusively that the candidate for recognition is the real chief and that he really enjoys, to the fullest extent, the authority which we are going to confirm in him. Thus we shall give back to the country its own élite, and we shall be able to entrust them, in all sincerity, with the share of responsibility which belongs to them in the administration of local affairs.

I presume that this will meet with many objections. Shall we resort to indirect administration in a colony where the natives have given so little proof of their ability? The answer is: no. With the exception of some regions of the Chad, we shall not yet apply indirect administration, but our policy, constantly and everywhere, will tend to place the delegated power in the hands of the native chiefs. In other words, we shall no longer try by ourselves to stimulate the bulk of the natives; we shall, instead, seek out the legitimate chiefs and devote all our efforts to them, and it is through them that we shall reach the masses and achieve their education.

The perfect head of a subdivision will be the one who, after having found those chiefs who command the greatest obedience, that is to say those who are the most deeply rooted in the country, will succeed in educating them by patient endeavor; he will then have in them reliable assistants who will relieve him of most of the actual work, and his role will merely be to suggest, to advise, and to control.

I know that some people will tell me that this is an illusion. Nevertheless, this illusion has been responsible for the building

up of Morocco and British Nigeria. They may add that the comparison is not valid. I would like to know why. The cultural level and the number of inhabitants have no bearing on the matter. Wherever there are men who respect an authority, it is this authority which, addressing them in their own language, is the best fitted to lead them, provided it is itself enlightened.

And this is our great duty. Our aim is not to create, by contact with us, a mob of proletarians, more or less ill clothed, more or less able to speak the French language; it should be the creation of an élite, beginning with the élite of the chiefs and notables who, entrusted by us with the personal responsibility of power, will progress in the face of difficulties, will apply themselves to the task and thereby gain a deserved pre-eminence in their country to the benefit of their country. Is this not better than to have a multitude of embittered individuals, liable to respond to slogans of doubtful origin and unfit for them?

But our aim cannot be attained unless we insist from the outset, and once and for all, upon the notion of respect. The chiefs must have the respect of those they govern; they must also have ours. We shall take the practice of viewing them as the traditional masters of the country, as members of a natural aristocracy, whose leadership must not be jeopardized.

The colony possesses two elements of stability: French sovereignty and the native authority rooted in the soil. The administrators *represent* the sovereignty of France, the chiefs *hold* the local authority. The former command respect and obedience by virtue of their function, the latter because of their birth rights. This distinction is fundamental, and my advice to all administrators is to meditate profoundly upon it; it explains the respect due to the chiefs, it also determines its nature.

Here again I know the objections that will be raised: the king of this or that territory arrives all dressed up in ludicrous rags, his power is based on poison, over-indulgence in palm liquor and women have aged him prematurely, his bad faith is obvious, his lack of comprehension of all our orders is complete. How can we respect such a ridiculous, guilty or worthless human being? I am aware of all that; I have come to know it in the course of the twenty-three years I have spent in Ubangi, and, nevertheless, I repeat that respect is due to the chief. If he himself does not deserve it, then his rank *does* deserve it. His son or his nephew will perhaps be a better man than he is, and what services can we expect from the successor if we have brought disrepute upon the rank?

Please do not misunderstand me. Respect for the chiefs does not mean approval of all their actions. I said that they ought to be educated; and it is a well-known fact that education entails the use of the rod. But the whole secret of education is to apply the rod when needed and in the right manner. We shall be as strict as necessary towards the chief, but never publicly. Recourse to the interpreter, unfortunately all too often indispensable, shall be avoided as much as possible. If private admonitions remain ineffective, other sanctions will be applied; they must always remain a personal affair between the administrator and the chief. Suspension of the allowance is one such means; it is not the only one, and a good administrator has more than one means of imposing his will, without violence or publicity in view of his knowledge of everything relating to the chief, and particularly of his foibles.

This means that every easy, that is, brutal method is to be discarded. I repeat that I am entirely opposed to any recourse to the tribunal or to dismissal as the ever handy solution. Only in exceptionally serious cases should a chief of canton, or district, even of a tribe or clan, and all the more, a superior chief or sultan, be brought before a court or be dismissed; moreover, as of today, in all such cases, a special report shall be submitted to me. Likewise, the jailing of village chiefs should be resorted to only with the utmost prudence. I consider that, as a rule, a competent head of subdivision has no need to imprison a village chief as a disciplinary measure.

Another error to be avoided is to look upon the chiefs as functionaries. The chief is not a functionary, he is an aristocrat.

This fact gives him the benefit of great freedom of manners, and regulations which apply to the members of the administration do not apply to him. Of course, we pay him an allowance, but this allowance, which, more often than not, is insufficient for his needs, is merely a token of honor, a prerogative of his authority such as we recognize it; it is neither a salary nor a fee. Therefore I disapprove of any tendency to equalize the chiefs; to deprive them of the individuality which they hold from their native land, and to prevent them from honestly increasing their personal income. Certain commercial undertakings should be open to them, without entailing any loss of prestige; this depends on the particular circumstances of each case. It is to be remembered, at any rate, that the best and highest ranking native official has no common measure with the chief. They stand on different levels, and although both equally deserve esteem and attention, it should be *neither the same esteem, nor the same attention*.

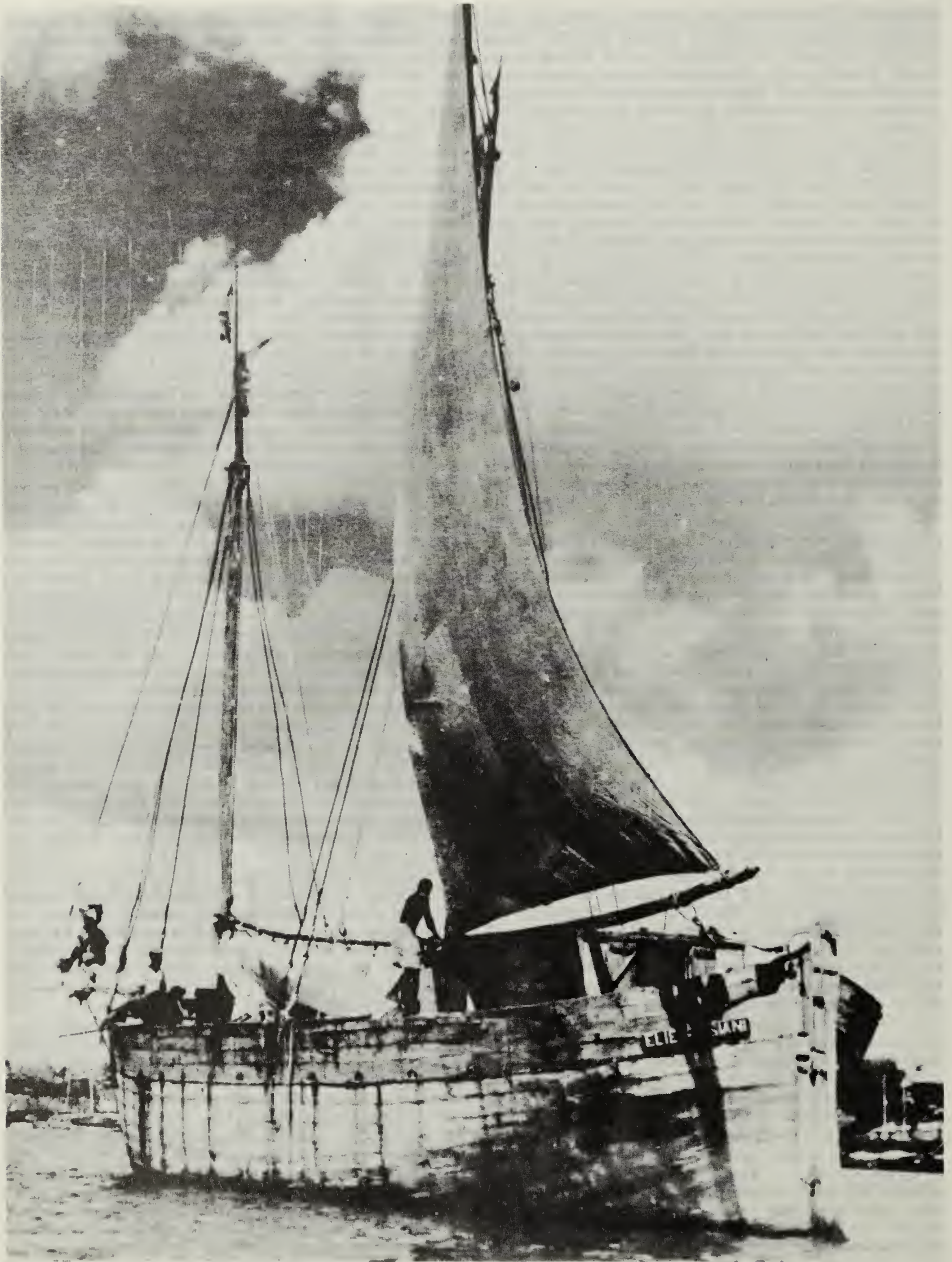
However, I must anticipate the objection: these chiefs whom you intend to seek out and place upon a pedestal, are you not aware of the abuses they commit? Let me repeat once more that I have spent twenty-three years in Ubangi and that I know what I am talking about. The wrongs committed by the chiefs, which have often been exaggerated beyond reason by theorizing or irresponsible governors and administrators, are not such serious abuses as one might be led to suppose.

But first of all, I repeat that if we administer against the will of the chiefs, we shall finally jeopardize the institution itself and be compelled to have recourse more and more to direct administration, which means, in practice, to the native functionaries. Will this not lead to even greater abuses? The only curb on a native official, left to administer alone in the bush, is fear of imprisonment, and temptation is often strong enough to overcome his fears. As for the chief, he is held back by the customs, by certain intangible sanctions, as well as by the feeling that he is the master, I was going to say the owner, of his people. If the head of a family sometimes mismanages his household, he is rarely so blind as to destroy it.

This must be kept in mind: the abuses so much talked about seldom exceed, all proportions considered, the demands of a modern State upon its citizens. Nevertheless, the citizens accept them. And it is our own people who prefer their own country, even though it may be more or less efficiently managed, and their own State, more or less unjust, to the kind of *order* which is imposed from outside. The natives feel the same way. Our censure and our mania for justice often surprise and even discourage them.

The truth is that they prefer, just as we ourselves do, the defects of their own homeland to a method which deprives them altogether of the feeling of having a homeland. Patriotism is a universal feeling; in native society, it is embodied in the chief. Without a chief, and consequently deprived of his homeland, the native no longer procreates, unless a collective exodus occurs, in which case the life of the tribe, menaced on its own territory, is transplanted and recreated elsewhere. I have had the opportunity to observe personally such occurrences in Eastern Ubangi where, as the result of too scrupulous an application of the policy of "justice and protection" prescribed by the Ministry of Colonies, highly worthy populations migrated to the Belgian Congo and to the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan where they sought and found a refuge from our too indiscreet solicitude. "Et s'il me plaît à moi d'être battue?" ("And what if I like to be beaten?" — French classic quotation.)

And anyway, what is the real extent of these abuses? Are they always marked by the depredation and cruelty ascribed to them? I, personally, think that as a general rule the chiefs hardly ever go farther than custom allows; and if they do go farther, they do so with an intimate knowledge of the resources and the mentality of their subjects. Thus they retain a certain measure of moderation or, at least, they realize their own injustice. We ourselves cannot always claim to do as much. We are motivated by the utmost good-will, as well as by a constant spirit of



*Madagascar sailing vessel*

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righteousness; and in spite of that, consider how often we commit excesses owing to ignorance, how many times we misuse our authority.

Even though he may be guided by the very best intentions, the administrator is often liable to do more wrong to the population than a disreputable chief. For the latter knows, while the former does not. Let us leave the care of administering the people directly to the one who has the knowledge; and if he continues to misuse his authority, let us show infinite patience in setting him straight.

Do not misunderstand me; I do not defend the abuses, I simply explain them and I indicate their extent. As I have already said, it is certain that the education of the chiefs must be the main object of our activity. If this education is conducted with a clear understanding of the mentality of the natives and with a true evaluation of the relations between the chief and his subjects, we shall gradually succeed in enlightening him and in raising him to a higher level; then he will justify our expectations. In this way the abuses will disappear, without causing the disappearance of the social organization of the native world.

I have dwelt at considerable length upon the subject of the chiefs. I repeat once more that they do not constitute, by themselves alone, the political institutions. Every existing detail, every living element in the political custom, must be the object of a solicitude similar to that devoted to the chief. In fact, grave errors may be committed in this respect. More than once, we have abolished systems which could rightfully be described as republican and have replaced them by a monarchy. More than once, we have ratified usurpers or entrusted hereditary power to persons who were simply district governors, in other words functionaries. Only recently we tried, vainly by the way, to force the Arab and Goranic tribes of the Chad to submit to the rule of chiefs, when their tribal laws and their social structure, based on the clan, preclude precisely in their case an absolute authority. All these are mistakes to be avoided. This is not the place to describe the regime proper for each territory and each tribe, but we must repeat that whatever sound and valid elements there are in this regime must be found and perfected, and we must abandon any formula of our own invention which would be arbitrary and artificial.

Indeed, whatever the political system may be, it is always possible, it is always necessary, to give it full play. This can be done by developing a sense of responsibility in those who should exercise this responsibility as of right. When the chiefs, the notables, and the counsellors are forced to act by themselves in whole-hearted cooperation with the Administration, they will experience the difficulties involved in the exercise of power; they will gradually gain in dignity and in modesty as they better realize the difficulties entailed in the exercise of authority once there is no guardian to exercise it in their behalf.

I intend to make, without any delay, a first test, by giving back to the native judges jurisdiction over part of the current penal justice wherever this will be immediately possible. Needless to say that the practice of civil justice, which in fact already belongs to the native judges, will be restored to them officially. Thus, the work of the head of subdivision will pass, in this matter, from the stage of direct action to that of control, in conformity with the general tendency which is to prevail in all fields. This policy, carried out methodically and sincerely, will place Equatorial Africa on the road to progress, while giving it once again the will to self-perpetuation, that is to say, the meaning of life.

### *III — Methods to be Used in Case of Deep Alteration of the Political Custom*

Up to this point, I have examined the most frequently observed case, that of a political custom often unknown to us or disguised, but deep-rooted nevertheless, and which we shall have to reinstate with full honors. But we must refrain from theorizing. In many instances, political institutions based on

customs have been profoundly altered as a result of our presence. The causes are numerous: in some instances, our economic needs have brought about the disintegration of the native communities; in other cases, the misguided development of native society has shaken the authority of the former leaders; and finally, unions of white men and colored women have produced a new class. It would be a mistake to disregard these facts and an absurdity to apply to such cases rules which have become obsolete.

But although these new facts require equally new solutions, we still must deal with them in the same spirit as with regard to the native society as a whole. In other words, the political organization to be created will confer no right without an equivalent responsibility, and the natives shall be educated toward the administration of their country; they will thus acquaint themselves with all the difficulties of administration, will learn to give it all their interest and will thus win their grades. Instead of vague misconceptions, which seem to imply the association of some of the natives to the government of all of France, or even of the whole Empire, we shall apply ourselves without demagoguery, and convinced of doing the right thing, to the task of shaping the natives into excellent citizens of their own land.

What are the limits of the problem? The rural or pastoral population, that is the inhabitants of the "bush," will follow the common law of the traditional institutions; the cities of Fort Lamy and Abéché, which possess a very solid Moslem structure, do not need to change their organization. The innovation which we contemplate concerns, therefore, only the other towns of the colony, but we must make a distinction here: these towns have, in some cases, a population which is close to the land, homogeneous and enjoying a rather high degree of development; while in other cases the population of the towns consist of more or less unsettled elements originating from the most varied regions. Only the former actually can be called "towns."

Finally, we also find certain individuals who are isolated in the traditional native society and unable, because of their personal degree of evolution, or by reason of their mixed blood, to find in it their natural place. These are the subjects of our study.

In their present state, I can see only two towns of French Equatorial Africa which could properly fall within the first definition I have offered; they are Libreville and Bakongo. The other agglomerations: Bangui, Ponte-Noire, Poto-Poto, even Port-Gentil, and the less important centers, do not possess that characteristic which is required of an urban community, and shall be treated in a different manner.

The towns have followed an evolution of their own and have acquired a personality which excludes them from the native political custom. Individuals of fairly advanced evolution owing to contact with us have formed in these towns the habit of an urban life. It is no exaggeration to speak in this connection of a genuine native middle-class. And let us beware of a rather common mistake: it is often difficult to refrain from smiling at these "civilized" natives or from becoming impatient at their pretensions. We must, on the contrary, consider the effort they have made in order to raise themselves to our level, and show them that this effort is but a beginning. A certain naive, and sometimes arrogant, satisfaction of the more civilized natives will gradually disappear when they are made to face serious problems and are compelled to solve them. Until now, they have adopted hardly more than the external aspects of European civilization: beautiful clothes, refined language, easy manners. Henceforth, they must be made to tackle the real tasks and made to realize that results cannot be achieved without a great deal of exertion. They will win the honors of which they are so fond by their capacity for concentration, for reflection and for work. It is with this in mind that we are going to establish the native "communes." The native "commune" will give a public personality to the already existing homogeneous towns which are

in fact exempt from the customary political laws. It will govern the life of all the inhabitants of the municipality, but only the class of "notables évolués" will participate in the municipal administration. It is from this class that the members of the municipal staff will be selected; the administration, placed under the control of a European official, will not deal in the beginning with financial matters, but it will have full authority in all questions pertaining to town life, thoroughfares, sports, professional and adult education. Its activity will be directed particularly toward the physical, intellectual and moral education of the inhabitants of the municipality. It will act in cooperation with the "Sociétés de Prévoyance" which, under its guidance, will assure its members lasting advantages, particularly through building loans. By developing the sense of property, the urban character of the town will be more firmly established and the families of the town will have that factor of personal progress which is still lacking. Finally, a simple police court, composed of members of the municipal staff, will give the latter an added feeling of responsibility toward those under its administration.

The French citizens of local origin, of colored or mixed blood, will, by right, belong to the class of "notables évolués" but it will not be limited to them; all those who will have reached a certain position in the town will also belong to it. A political statute for the "évolués" will be promulgated to this effect. The "évolués" defined under this statute will thus become genuine citizens of the colony and in this capacity, under our control, they will have to prove their ability in the administration of their own community. The former practice of granting illusory titles and rights without demanding in exchange any personal effort whatever, will be abandoned and replaced by a program of collective and well adapted work which will determine the titles and rights to be conferred on those who deserve them.

The special distinction conferred upon the "notable évolué" will not affect his personal status. In the very interest of the new class, he will still be subject to the customary civil and penal laws. It has been necessary to maintain the koranic tribunals in the four "communes" of the Senegal, although the Moslem law was, on many points, contrary to the public provisions of the civil and criminal code. This fact is conclusive proof that the status of citizen must not be defined in Africa as rigidly as it is in France. This example further confirms us in our conviction that the traditional laws are beneficial and possess the faculty of acquiring, by a sort of internal assimilation, the moral principles we recognize as valid. Here again, we shall not recreate the native in our own image, but we must guide his progress according to his own tendencies.

All the "notables évolués" will not reside in the few native "communes" which will be established. Some of them will find themselves isolated in various parts of Equatorial Africa. These will not be able to participate personally in local administration, since local affairs will still be administered according to the customary laws. But I suggest that they group themselves wherever possible and that they be encouraged to devote themselves to studies, sports, music or any other kind of entertainment; to this end, they should form clubs or associations. In all cases, the "notables évolués" will be exempted from disciplinary punishment, but it must be noted that their status provides for the withdrawal, in case of unworthiness, of the title and rights conferred upon them. This severe sanction, which must be applied only in exceptional circumstances, will have quite another import and will be much more appropriate than the "code de l'indigénat."

I previously mentioned the half-breeds. Their case deserves special attention. For sentimental reasons, European society has a somewhat uneasy feeling towards the half-breeds; I mean those who have been abandoned by their father or have not been recognized, which is practically the same thing. These motives are commendable in themselves, but they should not prevent us from viewing the situation with lucidity. Whenever a half-

breed, forsaken by his father, goes back quite naturally to his mother's family, I can think of no *a priori* reason why he should be taken away from it. His personal happiness is not exposed, in that case, to any greater risks than if he were to attempt to rise to a higher standard of life, which would probably mean isolation and in which success would be doubtful. Moreover, the granting of the status of citizen to the half-breed is very poor compensation for what he has given up: family life and security. Finally, I think that everything which contributes to placing the half-breed outside native society, without giving him access to European society, has the disadvantage of creating a pernicious rivalry between the negro and the half-breed, without any benefit for the latter.

Obviously, the father should always not only recognize his child born of a native woman, but also provide for his education, keep him at his side, and treat him as he would any other of his children. If he fails in his duty, what is the right thing for us to do? First, find out whether the half-breed has been accepted into his mother's family, and whether he is happy there. If the answer is in the affirmative, we should not take him away. If he distinguishes himself in school or elsewhere, note shall be taken of it, but it will not be because of his status, but because of his personal ability, that he will be chosen from among his comrades. If, on the contrary, he is the object of neglect or scorn, the Administration or the religious Missions should take care of him; they should apply themselves, however, not to make of him a marked human being, condemned to live a border life, outside society. Therefore, I do not think that the special orphanages for the half-breeds are a satisfactory solution; it would be advisable, in my opinion, to admit to them negro children as well. This would prevent the negro children from being jealous of the half-breeds and might perhaps alleviate somewhat the equivocal nature of the latter's situation.

We must not think that the problem has been solved later on because the half-breed has been made a citizen. The obsolete text which had been expected to solve all difficulties by facilitating his acquisition of citizenship, is to be considered secondary. Indeed the only way we can contribute to the welfare of the half-breed is to make him realize that, just like the negro native, he has a task to fulfill and that, like the latter, the only way to elevate himself, is by doing this task well. The girls should be married at an early age, so as to protect them from becoming "housekeepers." As to the boys, they must first of all be protected against loneliness and provided with a friendly environment in which they will feel both helped and protected from themselves. The Missions, the teachers, even the administrators, have an important role to perform in this matter. The young half-breed should be introduced to Scout organizations, sports, studies or recreation clubs and community societies; thus we shall give back to him a part of that social life outside of which he is in great danger of losing his moral balance, to his detriment and to our own.

We must always avoid segregating him, extracting him from among his negro rivals. In the Gabon, a real class of half-breeds has arisen which wars with the progressive black population. Such rivalry must gradually disappear in native communities, in the "Sociétés de Prévoyance" and, in general, in all organizations in which we are determined to demand from the half-breeds and from the negroes the same spirit of initiative and the same sense of responsibility. Our purpose is to draw them both into the administration of their country and then to reward them equally for their interest and their work. A progressive native society, conceived in the light of such principles, will be able to absorb the half-breeds whom we ourselves shall have taught, with patient solicitude, to occupy in the administration of the country that position in which they can bring the greatest benefit to the community and to themselves.

We must now deal with the question of agglomerations which do not have the characteristics of a town. They generally have a socially settled element, composed of officials, former



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*Grain for the next crop is stored in a "silo" in the center of the village.*

soldiers, artisans and commercial employees, plus an unsettled element ("boys," laborers, families of "tirailleurs," etc.) which is aptly called a "floating population." However, neither of these elements is rooted in the country, nor forms an integral part of it. A haphazard juxtaposition of districts, which do not even constitute distinct villages, cannot be expected to develop common tendencies and habits such as would be conducive to the creation of the mentality of town-dwellers.

Those agglomerations, born of our presence and of our various needs, present a serious problem; they empty the "bush," without giving us a collaboration commensurate with the harm they cause the native society; their population includes, side by side with useful elements, a mob of loafers and vagrants, idle most of the time, who live there at the expense of both Europeans and natives; these elements are lost for the villages and the cultivated lands they have abandoned, lost, for want of households, for the purpose of repopulation, lost physically through venereal diseases, and morally because of the habit of living without regular work and of a total neglect of social discipline.

It is among them that "boys" and laborers are recruited, but the proportion of those who prefer to loaf to those who work is approximately five to one. The administrators and police commissioners, weary of a thankless task, keep all these elements under a regime of chronic imprisonment, and it must be admitted that a methodical application of the decree on vagrancy brings about at least a temporary interruption of thefts and other misdemeanors, and relative security to the law-abiding inhabitants.

However, the evil in itself persists. To put an end to this situation, it has often been urged that unemployed natives should be sent back to their villages. This would indeed be the best solution; unfortunately, it would be difficult to carry out, and its very outcome seems doubtful. There is no assurance that these men, sent back home at considerable expense, would not return as soon as their escort leaves them on their own. I think it would be preferable to try another approach: discipline, and discipline only, will be the great remedy for this social plague.

The discipline I have in mind is not merely that of the "indigénat," not only that of the tribunal which punishes vagrancy and theft unremittingly, not only the discipline of a special prison for offenders, not only that of the health police who supervise prostitution; in other words, it will not be merely repressive discipline, applied with relentless vigilance, it will also be the improved discipline of the sport clubs, of the Scout organizations, of military training, and of the recreational societies. I have great confidence in the ability of all these institutions to return the uprooted natives within the "framework" which is indispensable to them. I rely on the religious Missions and on those responsible for the organizations of Scouts and "Eclaireurs de France" to bring back the children and the young men to disciplined life, in order to educate or reeducate them. The eventual result must be the natural elimination of the incorrigible elements who will have to choose between an endless sequel of punishments and the return to their village. This cannot be achieved at once, but the growing influence of the religious, sport, and Scout societies upon the children and the adults, the development of personal responsibility, the practice of command, all the excellent qualities promoted by these organizations, are certain to achieve the desired results in the long run.

The employers also have a part to perform in this matter. Their task is to provide steady employment for the greatest possible number of workers and to avoid hiring temporary personnel. I am aware of all the difficulties involved in retaining, for regular work, the services of men belonging to the "floating population;" I also know that the work is not always steady, and that certain jobs, such as the loading and unloading of cargoes, require the intermittent employment of laborers. However, even in this case, a certain discipline can be enforced.

Speaking generally, I favor the use of all methods likely to promote a close and steady relationship between employers and employees, depriving the inveterate idlers of the chance to exist without work. Obviously, I am speaking *only of the "floating population"* of the agglomerations; later I shall take up the problem of labor as a whole which requires, as I hope to show, more complex solutions.

#### IV — Social and Family Customs

In dealing with the political question, we assumed that the natives should be kept within the framework of their traditional institutions, or, if that framework has given way, that they should be integrated and drawn gradually into the local administration; we reached the conclusion that natives were happier under these conditions, had better chances to progress, and were more inclined to perpetuate the race than in any other conditions. We have rejected all the inadequate formulas, including individualism, that major scourge of our past policy. This same policy of not uprooting the natives, of helping them maintain their equilibrium, of educating them not separately but as members of an organized society and together with this society — this policy must govern also our attitude toward social and family customs. In other words, we shall respect customs, knowing that they will undoubtedly progress, and we shall confirm the disappearance of only those precepts which do not harmonize with the higher discipline the natives may have attained.

Here again, I cannot go into details. Customs are numerous and varied, and it is up to each administrator, each missionary, each employer or merchant to grasp the particular nuances of the customs prevailing in his region. However, there are certain principles which apply in all cases and which must be observed. The first is to leave such questions as marriage, divorce, adultery, care of foundlings, inheritance in the hands of the native judges, sitting in first instance. They are far better qualified to handle them than we are. As a general rule, we have dealt with these matters, particularly with the settlement of adultery and divorce cases, with a certain amount of levity. Under the pretext that women did not enjoy enough freedom before marriage, we have given them, by our reluctance to prosecute adultery and the ease with which we divorce, far too much freedom in marriage, thus providing the best means of destroying the family. The native judges, officially reinvested with the civil jurisdiction, will be able to restore order in all these matters; we must refrain from imposing our conceptions upon them, and be content with controlling the just application of their own conceptions as they may be amended, particularly under the influence of the Christian principles.

As to the consent of the girl to be married, important and desirable though it may be in itself, it is not to be made mandatory until customs have progressed in that direction under the influence of Christian teachings. Indeed, Christian principles entail, in exchange for this preliminary freedom, a moral compulsion which later binds husband and wife together and prohibits divorce as well as bigamy. I do not think that any other ideology can provide the natives with a rule sufficiently imperative to maintain with the same certainty the institutions of marriage and family.

The same considerations apply, in my opinion, to polygamy. It is said that it encourages depopulation, because only old and rich men can afford to pay the dowries of the young girls who remain childless under their roof. I have but little confidence in the administrative measures which could be taken to put an end to this evil. I think that the solution lies, in the first place, in the adoption of a religious discipline, and then in the improvement of economic conditions.

The dowry question is another instance where it may be necessary to modify customs. Often, indeed, the amount of the dowry is too high, as is frequently the case with the price of land in poor countries. The price of the principal "commodity" on the



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*"The first measure will be supplemented by the decision to relieve the laborer of all work that can be done by machines."  
(Félix Eboué)*

market, destined to satisfy an imperative need, is inflated, while the rest of the economic market remains dormant. In such instances, we shall endeavor, with due care, gradually to bring the amount of the dowry to a reasonable level. The artificial practice of successive marriages and competitive bidding for the dowry, with the ensuing family blackmail, must also be fought because of its immoral and anti-social character. However, we shall not interfere further, and shall not question the amount of the dowry when economic conditions are good and the marriage normal.

In general, we shall be extremely discreet in matters of legislation. The elements of customs derive from the same tradition; to reform any one element because it seems immoral or bewilders us — while leaving the rest untouched — would be to show too obviously our preference for our point of view as against the logic of the natives. The natives, who may not understand that our intention was to isolate a particular abuse in order to destroy it, may well view our action as part of a general undertaking aimed against customs, the abolition of which for them would mean the end of organized life and the beginning of a period of anarchy and ruin. Only a superior motive, intelligently interpreted, can justify our intervention. I have mentioned, not without reservations, the dowry, and I shall deal later on with Christian marriage. But in all cases we must abstain from generalization, and from regarding as accomplished what is still but a possibility. Of course, we shall guard against the danger of relapse those who have striven for the improvement of customs, but we must not try, by administrative measures, to improve customs as a whole, a procedure which surely would be too simple to be either reasonable or effective.

We must bear in mind that customs are civil law, mandatory for everyone, and that it is impossible to substitute for it another law for this or that class of individuals. And besides, what other law? Our own laws, applied here, would prove absurd, and legislation of our making, conceived for Africa,

would hardly be more appropriate. Whether the natives reform or modify their customs, as will be the case, even in individual instances, with the Christians and often also with the progressive natives, these customs will nevertheless remain theirs. For example, it would be very gratifying if monogamy would, in such a manner, become the general rule, but it would be absurd to apply the civil code to natives who, after accepting our teachings in the matter of marriage, will nevertheless remain moulded by their native country and faithful to their traditions. Africa must maintain and improve African law.

#### V — The Christian Influence

I have already, on several occasions, mentioned Christianity. The teachings of the Christian Missions reach the greater part of the native population in the territories of Gabon, the Middle-Congo and Ubangi-Chari. Their influence is less felt in the Chad owing to the inadequate number of missionaries there and to the fact that the population is predominantly Moslem. This propagation of Christian precepts is the most powerful stimulus to the evolution of native customs.

Is the educational activity of the missionaries to be considered one of those acts of outside initiative which, being contrary to the customs, might jeopardize the equilibrium of native society and ultimately destroy it? Such is not my opinion.

I know that we often smile at the behavior of these recently converted Christians. It is true that the spectacle of these neophytes, frequent visitors to both church and sorcerer, collecting scapulars along with fetishes, and disobeying the commandments with such inveterate puerility, might lead one to doubt that they have any faith at all. We must admit that nature is remarkably resistant to the catechism. It is wrong to smile, but it is just as wrong to deny the fact itself. It is perfectly true that nature is hard to curb, and therefore we are led to the conclusion that it would be dangerous to treat



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*Carving ivory is an old art in Africa.*

these recent and confused converts to Christianity in the same way as young Europeans who are heirs to fifteen to eighteen centuries of Christianity and whose whole being, though they may not be aware of it, is permeated with its influence.

The introduction of Africa to Christianity and evangelization is a very recent affair. In this field, as in all others, we must be circumspect. Much as in matters of administration, we shall have to keep in mind the habits peculiar to Africa, and to avoid a dogmatic imposition of social improvements. Here, as elsewhere, we shall proceed by means of an internal evolution and abstain from revolutionary transformations. We must remember that the penetration of Christianity in Gaul required more than three centuries, and what made it possible was the adaptation, the "conversion" if I may use the word, of the institutions themselves to Christianity; thus the sanctuaries of the Druids became sacred places for the pilgrims, frequented even to our days; sacred shrines were placed under the patronage of the Saints, not to mention the customs maintained by the Catholic Church despite their origin, such as that of the hanging of mistletoe at Christmastime. However, the social and family life were respected, and the conversion to Christianity was done so gradually that there was no apparent discontinuance of native tradition until the entire process had been completed, and the "Eglise de France" was fully established and flourishing.

The same principle must be applied in French Equatorial Africa. In this case too we must adapt all that exists, beginning with the political organization of the country. The evangelization must in no circumstance undermine the authority of the chief; it should, on the contrary, make it firmer by lending it additional justification.

The same consideration applies to the social life and the family; without forgetting that salvation is a personal matter and that the moral security of the children sometimes demands that they be taken away from a thoroughly bad environment, we must always bear in mind that our aim is not to create good Christians, but to educate the mass which is to be guided, together with its traditional organization, towards the Christian conception. The great problem of marriage must be handled in the same manner: the main purpose is not to achieve a certain number of model marriages among the Christian natives but rather to inculcate the Christian conception of marriage in a society which lives at present under a different rule, to lead it gradually to understand the indissolubility of marriage, the voluntary consent on which it is based, the obligation of monogamy, while modifying as little as possible the native's conceptions and family habits. It is essential that this endeavor be not interpreted as leading to a social life in which all traditional values are jeopardized.

If all this is achieved with great tact and an acute sense for the social implications, I see no reason why the prohibition of divorce and the punishment of bigamy should not apply to the Christian natives, by virtue of custom as it will have been transformed by Christianity. In this case as in all others, the change will not proceed from law but will be ratified by law *post factum*. The laws of custom, modified by the adoption of Christianity, will prove that Africa has progressed without being distorted.

It will then be manifest that the teachings of Christianity provide the natives not only with comfort and moral support, but also with that principle of personal responsibility which we strive to impress upon them. This certainty should make debates unnecessary. The method and the aim being common to all, we shall work together toward the same end. Missionaries as well as administrators, entrusted, all of them, with a similar task of leadership and control, will apply themselves, not only to the achievement of individual and present improvement, but even more to the task of educating native society through its own elite, of developing it, and of leading it towards a Christian life without disturbing its equilibrium.

## VI — Aims and Methods of Public Education

The scope of public education in French Equatorial Africa is still extremely limited. Methods have been considerably improved during the last few years, but a native teaching staff could not be created as rapidly as a program. Moreover, the mobilization of a certain number of European teachers slowed down the initial progress. Thus the Administration, technical services, trade and various branches of activity have far from a minimum personnel indispensable to normal life in the colony. We have not even a single native doctor or veterinarian. There is a great scarcity of skilled workmen and an even greater scarcity of foremen. Not to mention the total lack of skilled mechanics and typists; how many competent secretaries, accountants, and clerks are available? Very few. We must acknowledge that mediocrity is the rule and that improvement is hardly, if at all possible.

The training of native professional personnel will be extremely difficult. I think that a period of ten years will be necessary. Is it because of the length of time and continuity of effort required that our predecessors hesitated for so long to face this task? For us, it will be an additional incentive to undertake its accomplishment whole-heartedly and without delay. We ourselves shall not see the results, but they shall be achieved. On the one hand, the European staff will no longer be paralyzed by the thousand and one petty difficulties which cause a waste of precious time, and its efficiency will be increased tenfold without additional personnel. On the other hand, the native will have learned from us a really difficult task; he will no longer be satisfied with the small if easy benefits now granted him; he will learn to face reality and will thus acquire a sense of professional responsibility, and at the same time, real worth and real dignity.

It is in this spirit that I have undertaken to secure the cooperation of the French religious Missions. I have found in them a true understanding of our shortcomings and a most sincere desire to help correct them. We arrived at the conclusion that, since the education provided by the public schools and the teachings of the Christian schools have the same aim and similar methods, they were both to enjoy the same interest on the part of the Government. The financial aid which will definitely be extended to the Christian school system will enable it to expand its activities and gradually to improve its native personnel. In view of my opposition to any authoritarian method as well as to all measures likely to curb private initiative, I do not intend to nationalize the Mission schools, but their freedom of action will be directed toward the pursuit of a common interest — the public interest. The assistance thus freely and spontaneously offered will promote mutual good will and harmony.

The medium is therefore at our disposal: it is all the French schools of the colony. What shall we do with them? First, we shall provide a decent education for the greatest possible number of children, and then begin to select. Only those chosen for their abilities will be designated for a higher level of education. However scarce our professional personnel, we must never sacrifice quality for number. We must be very exacting, or we shall risk stagnation if our workers or clerks are only half-trained. Many of the children will therefore remain in the village, where they will nevertheless continue their education. They will even be kept in school as long as possible, and their skill in agriculture and handicrafts, based on traditional knowledge, will be developed.

As for the select pupils, they will continue their studies until they receive the "certificat d'études." The weeding out process however will be continuous, and pupils unable to keep pace will gradually be eliminated thereby reducing the number of students in each class and avoiding the risk of future failures. It is at this stage that the orientation of pupils toward the

various branches of training will begin. Not only the pupils and their families, but we ourselves, must accept the notion that there is no hierarchy of professions. A good iron worker, a good mechanic, a good mason must be respected as much as a good secretary. Whether this professional pride shaped in school, will find full expression in later life depends on us. I do not say that we have too many intellectuals and not enough manual workers; we are short-handed in every category and for precisely this reason, we must provide personnel equally for all of them.

Once a young man has really begun to master a trade, it is essential not to let him drop it half-learned. He will not be allowed to start on his own until he acquires a thorough knowledge of his craft and completed intensive training. To permit him to do otherwise would be to encourage the perpetuation of the low standards which now prevail. I must address a serious warning to employers not to yield to the temptation of hiring young native truants, unless they themselves are prepared to help them complete their apprenticeship and are able to fulfill this thankless task to the end. Let us beware, at any cost, of incomplete or imperfect achievements. The Railway Apprentices' School has done an excellent job in this respect; I recommend its example to all employers, the Administrative services included.

The Edouard-Renard School will continue in its role of leader. Until French Equatorial Africa is in a position to fill its annual quota we shall continue to draw students from the Cameroons as we did this year. However, the Edouard-Renard School is not enough, and I intend to establish one "Ecole Supérieure" in each territory of the colony, just as there is one in each colony of French West Africa. Thus an extremely pressing need will be met, particularly in the Chad where native children are very reluctant to come to Brazzaville; this is perfectly understandable in view of the complete difference in environment and customs.

The "Ecoles Supérieures" of the territories will, in principle, have a special class for sons of chiefs. Until now, I have only taken up the school training of artisan and professional personnel. The future chiefs must receive their early training at school. This is an old idea, often expressed but seldom carried out methodically. Therefore, we shall put it into effect only when we are certain of success, that is to say, when we have at our disposal the necessary personnel and equipment. It is essential that the sons of native chiefs receive special training under special discipline; any compromise in this matter would jeopardize the policy outlined above.

Thus, we are entering the period of progress through public education in close cooperation with the French missionary establishments. All teachers of the non-sectarian as well as the religious schools, must realize that we cannot be content with paper accomplishments. Equatorial Africa must, at long last, find in its native population the numerous and efficient personnel which, until now, it has never been seriously called upon to contribute. This is the task of the teacher, of all the teachers. Their activity and their devotion are indispensable to success.

Nor shall we be the only ones to benefit. The natives will also profit materially and morally. The awakening to responsibility, the ultimate goal of our efforts, will be the reward of a good education. The sport, scout and musical associations, which I have already mentioned, will together complete the moral evolution. The subsidies granted the two scout organizations were more than doubled in the 1942 budget. I feel sure that this was a good investment. I place full confidence in these organizations and in the "Collège Provincial" which will coordinate the free initiative of these two bodies, so that Baden Powell's principles of education can be efficiently applied in French Equatorial Africa.

## VII — The Economic Role of the Natives

Public education must provide us with the numerous native assistants we need in order to develop the colony. Numerous, of course, if we consider all the jobs to be filled, but nevertheless a minority in the society to which they belong. The mass of the native population is and will remain primarily agricultural. The entire policy we have outlined is based on the assumption that the native population will remain firmly attached to the soil and continue to develop within its traditional collective institutions; agriculture is the best, and perhaps even the only medium likely to ensure this progress, this prosperity of the village and of the tribe, this thriving stability of the native population which is uppermost in our minds.

The greatest success, political as well as economic, achieved in French Equatorial Africa, native cotton cultivation, is the most striking example of this fact. We have seen native tribes, formerly very poor, sometimes even wild, achieve in this manner a prosperity extraordinary in view of their former condition. This revolution has taken place without disorder, without moral corruption, without a change in institutions, because it was made on the spot, within the existing framework, and because it was the native society, as it was organized, that furnished the labor and benefited from the results.

The success of cotton cultivation in Ubangi-Chari and in the Chad can be achieved just as well with any other appropriate crop, in addition to and in combination with the food crops. The food crops should, under no circumstances, be neglected, but the Negro population is also entitled to its share of prosperity, and we can help it by fostering the development of an agriculture, whose products can be exchanged. All the regions of Equatorial Africa must have crops to sell, and a market for them.

I have already given detailed instructions for the cultivation of oil-producing palm trees. Instructions on other crops will follow. In order to spare the natives the disappointments which resulted in the past from certain requirements of Metropolitan France (castor-oil plant, for instance), only those crops will be promoted whose cultivation presents the minimal disadvantages. With this reservation in mind, the development of new crops will be undertaken with the same care that was given to cotton. What has been done before can be done again, and the same method should be followed: an agricultural enterprise undertaken by the village, the district, and carried out by the local population, all the natives working together on their own soil and in their own interest. In this manner, the population will also increase in its own territory and discover in its own soil every opportunity for a better life, without forfeiting in the least the benefits of tradition, nor the stability of its social and economic organization.

A native agriculture, conceived along these lines, not only corresponds to the profound aspirations of the native masses, but it is also more likely than European colonization to ensure the prosperity of the colony. Indeed, agricultural colonization undertaken by Europeans, requires, to be successful, the hiring of a great number of laborers; this, in turn, may harm the balanced development of the population, while the massive purchase of land can jeopardize the normal growth of the villages. I do not say that no concessions whatsoever should be granted. However, as a general rule, I think that it is preferable to promote the progress of the native farmer by having him work his own land, rather than to resort to European settlers who will have to employ the same native, who will then work for a wage.

We must therefore contemplate a change in the role of the settler. Instead of devoting himself to the direct and limited exploitation of a concession, the settler will set the example for the native production of the surrounding region, while he himself will supply and promote this production. He will not



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*"The mass of the native population is and will remain primarily agricultural." (Félix Eboué)*

engage personally in any other strictly agricultural activities beyond experimenting, selecting, plant-nursing and establishing small model plantations. Nevertheless, his influence will extend far beyond the limits of his property and promote throughout the neighborhood the development of local agriculture. He will direct the first attempts of the villagers, will advise them on all occasions, supply them with the necessary seeds, plants and tools. In short, he will promote, guide and protect their efforts and will undertake to purchase their crops at a fair price. From his concession—the vital hub of the region—the settler will inspire the entire district, and will share with the natives the profits of success. The Agricultural Service will also assist the settler, discuss with him the best experiments to undertake, facilitate his purchase of the necessary agricultural equipment and supply him with the necessary European personnel from among its younger trainees.

It may be argued that this is more or less what is already taking place with regard to cotton. I do not deny it, and I myself have mentioned cotton cultivation as an example to be followed. But this example, which has certain shortcomings, will be improved upon in the light of subsequent experience. The cotton growers have not always shown the necessary concern for local agricultural conditions; greater care and attention will be required of the settlers. If, as we are willing to grant, the settler thus engaged in a cooperative venture with the natives must have a certain measure of security, it will be preferable to provide for it by means of a freely discussed contract rather than by a grant of monopoly.

The "Sociétés de Prévoyance" may hold for a given person one or several entire harvests produced by the concerted efforts of all members. The contract embodying this agreement can be for any length of time and may stipulate precise conditions necessary to ensure the real success of the common endeavor. Since the "Société de Prévoyance" has funds of its own, it can play a more or less important, and direct, role, according to its means. In short, all sorts of agreements may be reached between the "Société de Prévoyance" and the settler.

Not only shall I give my consent, in principle, to such contracts, I shall, whenever possible, encourage them provided a study of the contemplated programs establishes their soundness. I have already said that the "Société de Prévoyance" is the great business of the natives. If it is to succeed, it cannot be satisfied with partial and intermittent profits, it must bring great wealth to the country. Since many of the "Sociétés de Prévoyance" do not have the necessary funds for large agricultural and commercial undertakings, and since none of them has the personnel needed for such enterprises it is necessary to look elsewhere for the required assistance.

This is all the more so because, even if the "Sociétés de Prévoyance" were in a position to assume responsibility for the agricultural and industrial part of the program, they still would need an intermediary for the commercial aspect. Why should we not assign to this intermediary at least a share of the preliminary work and expenses?

I shall repeat it again, our colony can progress only through the concerted efforts of all its European elements. The settler is a partner of the administrator, just like the missionary and the miner. The time has passed when the Administration claimed to have accomplished everything by itself while the other essential elements of the colony regarded this claim with indifference or ill-temper. Concerted effort and cooperation are indispensable in all spheres, and it is now the turn of agriculture to benefit from them.

It seems to me that the miners are in a rather advantageous position to lead the way in this respect. The cooperation of mines and regional agriculture is possible. I suggest that the miners give it their consideration.

But the European settler will not be satisfied to be the promoter, the guardian and merchant for the agricultural production of the natives. Other economic activities will be specifi-

cally reserved to him, such as the exploitation of mines and forests, all branches of industry, public works and, in general, all those activities which are under the direct control of Europeans and which require the large investments. The necessity for capital investments and technical management, for the time being, bar the natives from such undertakings; the European must meet both these requirements to be successful. The services rendered the colony by a European settler are measured by his legitimate success, which can be attained only by applying the necessary technical and financial means to a thoroughly studied project.

The most difficult and universal problem of industrial operations is the scarcity of manpower. I am not speaking of skilled labor, which is so obviously insufficient today but which will be provided gradually by the combined efforts of schools and employers. Entirely different is the situation of common labor whose employment has thus far been so unwisely handled that it is one of the factors contributing to the falling birth-rate. Not only is labor scarce, not only are its ranks not being replenished, but the way it is used exhausts its very source. It can be said, almost without exaggeration, that the greater the colony's production the greater its impoverishment.

Regulations were issued some time ago in order to protect native workers from unfair employers, and it was hoped that the problem would thus be solved. I do not deny the value of these regulations, evidenced by the fact that men employed in workshops are usually stronger and healthier than the villagers. Whether or not abuses were committed in the past, it is now a fact that laborers, engaged in normal work, under conditions consistent with their physical requirements, undoubtedly benefit physically from this work.

However, the gratifying result of the labor regulations and of their observance by the employers, leaves the problem of the population unsolved. The country is being depleted of its population; this is owing, in great measure, to the fact that too much labor is employed and that it is unwisely employed.

Too much labor is employed. The low rate of wages has been and continues to be a source of illusion; it seems cheaper to employ men than to use machinery; this is doubtful from the individual standpoint, and is certainly false from the general standpoint. Owing to this illusion, enterprises become more numerous and more scattered; employers seek only the profit reaped from the use of native labor, without any thought or concern for the future. In the regions where laborers are recruited, the resources of the population are taxed to the utmost, instead of being spared as much as possible by concentration of the workshops and use of machinery.

On the other hand, labor is unwisely employed. It is not our task to track down those responsible for this state of affairs, but it is deplorable nonetheless, and we must find a remedy, together and rapidly, under penalty of utter failure. At present, and this condition is particularly acute in Gabon, the young men of the villages in the central regions are torn away from their normal life, from their wives and children, transported to camps where all races intermingle, where men are uprooted, isolated with the worst possible moral consequences. There, they will have no opportunity to continue their race, and there some barren prostitute will probably contaminate them for life. There, for a salary and better muscular development, the natives forfeit the deep meaning of life as well as the means of perpetuating it. While this male proletariat is created, the villages, deprived of their best elements, stagnate; the women have no more children; the race dwindles away.

Sometimes the young men return to their village at the end of their contracts, and although the community has been deprived of the benefit of the best years of their lives, this is not the worst. Frequently, they disappear forever and are absorbed into that "floating population," undisciplined, morally worthless, whose unproductive wanderings swell the poorer suburbs of the towns.

It is a fact that the population of Gabon is diminishing. I am willing to admit that faulty management of labor is not the only cause responsible for this decrease, but it is the main cause. The mining industry has aggravated further a situation already made difficult by the exploitation of the forests, especially as the opening of the gold mines was not preceded by the construction of roads. Thus, the call for manpower is further intensified by a disproportionate portage problem which has paralyzed the villages previously untouched by labor recruitment.

In this case, the solution is easy; it lies in building roads. The additional effort it will require for a certain time will be largely rewarded in the near future. But even the elimination of the portage problem will leave the question of labor unsolved. As I have already said, the first precaution is to conserve this precious and rare wealth; to this end, the scattering of enterprises must be avoided. This will benefit production itself, and several serious reasons impel us to consider the establishment of a Forestry Syndicate and of a Gold Syndicate, which would make the common effort more concerted, more economical, more fruitful and less likely to fail. This first measure will be supplemented by the decision not to give the laborer work that can be accomplished by mechanical means. This matter is of primary importance, and only if this is actually done will prosperity as well as repopulation be possible in Equatorial Africa. It is therefore imperative that every employer establish, without delay, a program for mechanization of his enterprise and that he carry it through. During this period of mechanization, the Administration will give the miners and the foresters all the assistance it can command, because this is a matter of public interest, one that I shall always consider as such, from every standpoint. Present difficulties may possibly delay the results, but they will finally be achieved.

However, machinery will never entirely replace human labor. Certain types of work, if only, for instance, operation of the machines themselves, will always require manpower. We are thus back at our starting point, but our criticism of the present situation provides the key to the solution of the problem. All the necessary labor can be recruited and employed, provided this does not throw the life of the natives out of balance. With this in mind, it is necessary not to move the worker alone but to bring with him to the workshops his wife and children; better still, we must promote the formation of villages of the same race and of the same tribe around the workshops.

Thus there will be an end to the confusion existing among rootless individuals gathered from all parts of the territory. Men from the same region will be regrouped with their wives and children, forming the nucleus of a real village. The men will work at the workshop and under the supervision of the employer will prepare the land for cultivation as they did in the village. The women will cultivate the soil, as they did in the village. The employer will act as the guardian of the community, thus contributing to social reform. He will build the huts, encourage the sowing of vast areas, will buy from the village its surplus production, provide medical care for everyone, supply medicines and mosquito-nets, raise cattle; briefly, he will ensure the normal existence of the village, while providing it with the advantages and the elements of progress which it would lack in its natural state.

Two conditions are equally indispensable: to maintain and to educate. I repeat that the great means of preservation will consist in letting the women work, not in the workshop, but on the land and in the house. If the woman remains idle, one of the foundations of the community disappears, and the results are forfeited. The second means is to distinguish between races and tribes. A village can be transplanted, it cannot be created arbitrarily. Although a certain amount of compulsion will be necessary in the beginning, it will be applied only with a view to safeguarding ultimately the social organization

of the population, and to returning it its natural framework, together with the will and the faculty of perpetuating the race.

The Administration cannot carry out this program instead of the employers, but it is now a proved fact that I was not mistaken in placing my confidence in their cooperation. The social role of the employer is understood, and well understood, and the sacrifices which are required and which will soon be rewarded, are accepted cheerfully. It is my desire that the administrators, in turn, facilitate, with all means at their disposal, this establishment of villages in the areas of employment, and that they consider the employer responsible for the creation and the development of the village as the most important auxiliary of their authority. Now is not the time to discuss each one's prerogatives, now is the time to work, all together, and wholeheartedly, for the realization of a program whose failure would entail either cessation of production or the extinction of the population.

The new duties assumed by the employer will have their compensations. The worker will owe him his employment, and the greater the cost of his installation, the greater his debt. It is our duty to make the native realize that work is the primary element of his progress. It is equally indispensable to teach him that the workshop is not an ever open gate, where he appears only when he needs money. Therefore, I consider that the failure of the worker to fulfill his share of the contract ought to entail a sanction. It cannot be a penal sanction, but if he is sentenced to pay damages and fails to comply, he should be liable to imprisonment. The contract must be fulfilled honestly by both sides, and, if the native does not realize it at first, he will have to learn it for his own benefit.

There remains one branch of economic life in which the Europeans, without enjoying an actual monopoly, occupy a predominant position. It is commerce. Commerce is of great importance to native policy. Depending on how it is conceived, it can either jeopardize the social balance or, on the other hand, strengthen it. The natives are the overwhelming majority of the customers, and everyone knows that the merchant imposes his taste on the customer, not vice versa. Colonial commerce can and must have an educational value.

It has been said that the exploitation which prevailed in the days of the slave-trade is a thing of the past; I am not so sure. Of course, the lowest and most puerile passions of the native are no longer played upon in order to cheat him; gold and ivory are no longer bartered for whiskey and glass beads. But although money is now used as the medium of exchange and helps regulate prices, the natives are nevertheless still tempted with ridiculous or absolutely useless articles, and their childishness is still exploited for immediate profit. The "unwearable" caps, the shirts which go to pieces the first time they are laundered, the knives which twist at the first attempt to use them, all the cheap wares which were one of Japan's most prosperous industries, are still being sold. This is evidence that the native customer is not respected, and that the notion of Africa as a country where anything can be sold has not been abandoned.

I know that the present period may be viewed as one of transition. However, it must be made as short as possible, because this corruption of trade not only makes the natives ludicrous and debases them, it tends also to let loose the most fruitless individualism. The natives are immediately enticed and soon spend all their money for their own pleasure and vanity without any benefit for their family or their village. Thus each native keeps up an ephemeral though picturesque appearance which brands him with an indelible mediocrity.

Commerce must understand its role, which is to educate the natives. It must spare their naive interest the sight of attractive but worthless articles and offer them, instead, not too expensive but good quality merchandise. It must induce them to build

their houses, furnish their households, improve the cultivation of their land, equip their village and their country. And this will be sound business. Customers who desire more commodities, who acquire the habit of purchasing more expensive goods, are customers who work more, who earn and consequently spend more. The future lies in this direction, and I feel certain that young peoples who are only beginning to sell their products under favorable conditions can, under the influence of an intelligent merchant, pass from the most rudimentary stage to well organized comfort, without having to prolong the humiliating period of barter trade. Don't you think that this merchant would, at the same time, be making a profitable transaction?

### VIII — Of the Feeling Behind Our Policy

Lyautey wrote of a "Resident" of Annam: "He is very clever, but he will never achieve anything because he lacks that spark of love without which no great human enterprise can be accomplished." I quoted Lyautey in the beginning, and I quote him again in concluding, but it is his whole life that I ought to cite in example. If Lyautey was successful in Morocco, it was because he loved the Moroccans. His work was not

perfect, and the Protectorate has seen its unfortunate as well as its happy days. However, the natives placed their confidence in him because he loved them, and his partial failures have been affectionately forgotten.

In the same manner we shall love the colored people of our French Equatorial Africa. We have received them in trust. It is this trust that we were determined to maintain last year, together with the honor of France. They are bound to us, and we are bound to them by a common fate. All of us, missionaries, planters, settlers, officials, merchants who have spent more than half of our lives here, who have most of our interests here, regard the natives of this country with frank friendship. We have worked out together the rules which will guide them to prosperity. Let us now inspire these rules with our love.

Other colonies may be more progressive than we are, because they have applied earlier, and more methodically, similar policies. Let us make sure that the final result will nevertheless be even better in this country, because we know better than anyone else the secret of *that spark of love, without which no great human enterprise can be accomplished.*

(Félix Eboué, Brazzaville, November 8, 1941).



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*"A good iron worker, a good mechanic, a good mason must be honored as much as a good secretary."*  
(Félix Eboué)

## APPENDIX III

### *Speech by M. Rene Pleven on Colonial Policy*

*The following are parts of a speech delivered by M. René Pleven, Commissioner for Colonies, on January 14, 1944 before the Provisional Consultative Assembly.*

"Certain facts are already emerging from the disaster which our country suffered in May, 1940, disaster the consequences of which will be felt and the example taken by other nations in the course of future years. The two following facts arose out of the catastrophe: the one is the resistance of the people of France, inside as well as outside the country; the other, the total, unshakable loyalty of her colonies.

"This loyalty, even under the most difficult conditions, has never weakened or faltered. It has remained unaltered despite the cutting off of communications and mail, the shortage of products, the absence of the fleet and reduction of the army.

"This loyalty to France has never been shaken by doubt, even while French authority was temporarily exercised by men whose ties to Vichy made them the instruments in a policy as contrary to the interests and wishes of the people of the colonies as to the interests and wishes of the people of France. Whether in Madagascar, Jibouti or the Antilles, or even in Indo-China, occupied today by the enemy, the confidence of the people of France, and their faith in her future, have been stronger than all their sufferings.

"As time passes the historical and political importance of this fact will but grow. The further we are from it the better we can evaluate it. The future will consider this as one of the miracles of France, the miracle of a mother country, overwhelmed by the invader and betrayed, but still able to look beyond the imprisoning wall built around her by the enemy and see that not one of her possessions, not one of her islands, not one of her dependencies has deserted her in the misfortune, not one has failed to try to express its loyalty during this disaster.

"The fact that, after less than a century, such a spiritual unity has been achieved, is proof that, even when justly criticized, our colonial policy, our methods of administration, and the quality of our personnel, held in themselves basic elements of solidarity. This proves that the colonizing instinct does exist in the French. It is an instinct which should be further developed and improved, but it is one which draws its inspiration and élan from something that can be neither improvised nor replaced, because it is the result of twenty centuries of Christianity and humanization — I mean the complete absence of all racial prejudice.

"Gentlemen, this is the first time that a political Assembly, essentially Metropolitan, meeting on soil which by law was made part of Metropolitan France itself, but which remains in so many respects the foremost and one of the most beautiful lands of our Empire, has devoted so much discussion to French colonial policy. I hope I have convinced the Assembly that the colonial policy of the Committee is a policy of action, zeal and vigor, a policy of practical men who look to the future. Such a policy is possible thanks to the devotion of some tens of thousands of men — government employees, officers and soldiers, colonists, doctors, missionaries, who are the people of our Empire; their numbers have been depleted by mobilization; over-long service has weakened them and overwork often exhausted them. These men are scattered throughout the world. How many of them toil, suffer and struggle in this isolation, which one of you has already so beautifully and gravely described.

"May I express the hope that, if this Assembly closes this debate with an order of the day, this order of the day will be

not only an appreciation of the Government's action, but also a message from the Assembly of Resistance, a message which, from the New Hebrides to Saint Pierre and Miquelon, Dakar, and the French possessions in India, will be one of encouragement from the French Resistance to our loyal colonies, a message that will betoken the solidarity and fraternity of the 'bush' and the 'Maquis.'

"However, Gentlemen, even if in the field of economy — whether it be a question of supplies or price-control, all our preoccupations are concerned with the day when Metropolitan France and her overseas territories can resume their contacts, our preparations for liberation would be incomplete if we did not agree to the drawing up of a program which, based on the trust she has inspired, will prove that France is a systematic and enterprising nation, anxious to promote the welfare of the millions of human beings whose loyalty she has won.

"And that is why we took the initiative and arranged a conference here, in Brazzaville, the center of French Africa — the capital of French Resistance. This conference is not of the whole Empire, as has been stated, but a French-African conference. Its purpose is to study certain definite questions, in consultation with the Governors-General, Governors and Administrators of our territories, in French West, East, and Central Africa. The Governor-General of Algeria, and the Resident-Generals of Morocco and Tunisia have sent delegates who will represent French North Africa as observers.

"It would not have been practicable to hold an Empire Conference, because the difficulties connected with traveling and communications, and also the absence of Indo-China ruled out such a conference.

"Although conditions are different in the various colonies, there exist in French Africa a number of similar problems; this will make it possible to have a certain internal unity in the discussions, which is necessary if we want to hold them above the plane of dry theoretical argumentation.

"Four groups of problems will be discussed at the Conference.

"The first concerns native policy. This will require the study, among other things, of: a) The part Europeans, or rather, non-Africans, are to play in the colonization of Africa. b) Health Services and Hygiene; our aim being to improve the health of natives and to increase the population, it will be necessary to study some plan for organizing Health Services for the care and protection of the masses. c) Organization of the native society with particular attention to the status of more progressive natives in regard to citizenship. d) The status of the native family, and the degree to which we must respect family and tribal customs, particularly those concerning the dowry, the free consent of girls to marriage and Christian marriage. e) Organization and aims of public education. f) Labor. This question in particular will have to be thoroughly examined.

"The second group of questions to be examined at the Conference comes under the heading of political economy.

"We have observed that a curious and disturbing theory put forward under the pretext of organizing the world distribution of raw materials, and probably Axis-inspired, is gaining ground. As a result there is an international tendency to revert to old methods of Protectionism and even pro-slavery. According to this theory, the role of Africa would be to supply the industrial countries with raw materials and to buy manufactured goods from them. We refuse to accept as an axiom this over-simple subordination of one continent to others, so much the more after having observed since 1940 how weak and unjust this theory proved when put into practice, even on a small scale, in dealings between France and her Empire, and the power of resistance of France compared to that of her Empire.

"The Soviet Union has taught us a great lesson: Its invulnerability is due not only to the heroism of its armies and



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the patriotism of its citizens, but also to the fact that statesmen of genius had scattered its factories and industries throughout its most distant territories.

"The interest of the African peoples and the improvement of their standard of living require that a certain amount of industrialization be undertaken on a national basis, but this will not interfere with the interests of the manufacturing countries. The task of the Brazzaville Conference will be to assemble the data necessary for drawing up a plan for this industrialization. It will also study the problem of customs regulations. The technicians who have accompanied the Governors to attend the Conference will need to list all the factors necessary for the elaboration of plans for the development of public services, communications, and repair of equipment. This plan will begin to operate immediately after the end of hostilities, and must take into consideration the possibility, I can even say the probability, of there being vast international cooperation in this domain.

"The end of the war will not solve the difficulties of supply and distribution from which all our colonies are suffering.

"Industry in France and in other countries will have to meet conflicting demands for the reconstruction of Europe and of the Far East. These demands will be submitted, for an indefinite period of time, to the discipline of planned distribu-

tion, in which the most urgent needs of our territories must also be included. Our needs must therefore be listed and classified according to their urgency without any further delay.

"The third group of problems concerns the political and administrative organization of territories.

"Many speakers have pointed out that, while the colonies have undergone a number of rapid changes during the last 20 years, the same basic regulations, promulgated right after the conquest, have hardly been amended. Automobiles, airplanes, roads, a higher standard of living—all this has been ignored by the Legislature which seems to be ignorant of this progress.

"The simplification of the bureaucratic system, a greater decentralization, an extension of the authority of the governors,—these measures are not in contradiction with the subordination of the chiefs of territories to a united national policy. The administration of Senegal is based, in 1944, on principles set up almost a century ago!

"The method of introducing large industrial and technical services into this administration has never been clearly determined.

"I note that all the speakers who have joined in this debate agree with me that it is imperative for the development and intellectual advancement of the native populations to prepare ways and means of associating the natives with the European

settlers of each colony and group of colonies in the task of administration. The methods used to bring this about will differ in the various territories according to the degree of development and the vitality of native institutions already in existence.

"Finally, Gentlemen, let us examine the fourth problem, one which undoubtedly will arouse some most interesting discussion, I mean the question of how the Colonies are to be represented in the future constitution of France. The new Republic, one and indivisible, which we all eagerly desire, must be different in many respects from the old. It will need to be freed of many unjust and obsolete regulations concerning the representation of the colonies in the central government. The inadequacy of these regulations was strikingly revealed when on June 18, 1940, a population of 60 million in our overseas territories found itself bound by the Armistice although it had not been consulted by the men in power. And even if these men had wished to consult the Colonies they could not have done so for there existed no organization for giving expression to their opinion. All colonists who are French by birth, by choice, or in spirit, wish to see the political power of France definitely and vigorously exercised in all overseas territories over which her flag flies. But they also want the Colonies to enjoy greater administrative and economic freedom, so that their peoples

may be trusted with higher responsibilities and take an active part in the initial development of a Republic on their own soil. No one wants to enable the Colonies through some arbitrary extension to interfere in the internal affairs of Metropolitan France. On the other hand no one wishes the political and business circles of Paris to be permitted to exert pressure on the internal affairs of the Colonies.

"I think no one could possibly assert that colonial representation as it existed in 1939 was satisfactory in this respect. The time has come to consider, to examine and explore the possibilities of the idea of a federation, to create within the French constitution some body in which France and all her territories would be represented. There will be many difficulties to overcome, many problems to solve, but, as Mr. Lapie remarked with tact and energy, are not difficulties and problems the price of all human progress and achievements? I am weighing my words carefully, but I can say quite simply that it does not appear impossible to find a satisfactory solution which would clearly outline the federal functions and powers of the Metropolis which would be not only the founder but also the most prominent, the most worthy and the greatest member of the French Federation, and would provide a means for achieving the real unity of all French territories both among themselves and in relation to the mother country."



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*A peaceful backwater in Central Africa*

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